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INDIAN STUDIES

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5. *SPIRITUAL REALIZATION*

SPIRITUAL REALIZATION

BY

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THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY
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IN MEMORIAM A.H.

‘ I am the Resurrection and the Life.’

FOREWORD BY THE EDITOR

OFTEN I have found that the ideal of Spiritual Realization has a great appeal to Indian readers. 'To realize God is the highest desire of many religious men in India. As to whether everyone who uses the word 'realization' attaches the same meaning to it and as to why this conception of realization has a great power over the Indian heart and soul, it is difficult to say. But the general fact may be conceded that realization has a considerable attraction for people in India.

Miss Ferguson, the gifted author of this book, has made this deep longing of the Indian soul the main theme of her thought. She has constructed her philosophy of religion on the basis of this valuable ideal. It will be acknowledged that in addressing herself to this task, she has undertaken a piece of strenuous thinking. Her subject is very abstract and she has perforce to deal in matters which require a deep capacity for introspection. I have discussed with her the course of thinking embodied in this book for some years now in correspondence and have noted with what patience and industry she has striven for clearness and lucidity in a subject where clearness and lucidity are difficult. She has further brought her interesting mind to bear upon the important religious documents of Hinduism and Christianity and has managed to view them from a fresh point of view.

Her main thesis is that religion is ultimately a matter of inner experience. Those who believe in Revelation, and all religious men believe in Revelation, stress the importance of certain historical facts. The Christian roots his belief on such historical facts as the Birth, Life, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. These facts are of primary significance to him. They occurred and no one can call in question their objective validity. From the emphasis which is constantly laid upon the importance and value of these historical occurrences it often happens that people begin to think that the heart of the Christian religion consists of certain outward events in history. But Miss Ferguson well points out that these external events in history must be transmuted into the rich inner life of each man. Some lines which she quotes on page 230 of this book bring out forcibly the central argument of her book.

‘ Though Christ a thousand times
 In Bethlehem be born,
 If He’s not born in Thee
 Thy soul is all forlorn.

The Christ on Calvary
 Will never save Thy soul
 The Christ in Thine own heart
 Alone can make thee whole.’

Some readers of the book may feel that she overdoes her argument and that she does not sufficiently recognize the importance of the objective realities of

religion. Everyone would acknowledge that religion, in the final analysis, is primarily an inward realization and that what counts is depth of spiritual conviction. But everyone does not work out as carefully as Miss Ferguson does the significance of all the realities of religion in reference to this conviction. Her contribution lies in the emphasis which she places upon the inward character of religious experience and of the interpretation which she offers of the religious history of Hinduism and of Christianity from this angle.

Twice she quotes the authority of St. Augustine for following this line of thought and it is just as well that her thinking on the subject should have his support. It is significant that she buttresses her argument with a weighty quotation from St. Augustine at both ends of her book. First in the beginning in pages 27-29, and again well on in the book in pages 139-40, she quotes aptly the following paragraph from St. Augustine: '—Our true Life came down hither and bore our death—and He thundered, calling aloud to us to return hence to Him into that secret place, whence He came forth to us into the Virgin's womb wherein He espoused the human creation, our mortal flesh, that it might not be for ever mortal;—and thence—calling aloud to us to return unto Him. And He departed from our eyes that we might return into our heart, and there find Him. For He departed, and lo, He is here.'

This doctrine of the inward character of religious experience has been taught a great deal in India and

Miss Ferguson studies the long development of religious thought in India beginning from the days of the Upaniṣads and coming down to modern times. She points out how the ancient Rṣis were awake to the importance of inward Spiritual Realization and how in succeeding ages this conviction of the Rṣis was lost sight of amidst a mass of philosophical speculation and outward ritual. Her reading of the story of India's religious quest from this point of view has a great deal that is stimulating about it.

I would ask all earnest students of religion to study this book carefully, to ponder its deep teachings and to live out its central convictions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I WISH to express my gratitude to His Grace the Lord Primate of Ireland for encouragement and help given me during the time of writing this book.

My thanks are also due to Professor Ghosh, Hazaribagh, for first leading me to appreciate the beauty of Indian philosophy.

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INTRODUCTION

1. CHRISTIANITY HAS NOT BEEN ENRICHED AS IT SHOULD BE BY THE WEALTH OF INDIA'S THOUGHT

THE East has a message for the West, no less than has the West a message for the East. In learning from the East the West will find real gain. Just as the early Christians by searching their Hebrew Scriptures found that their knowledge of Christ was enriched ; just as in later years did enrichment again take place through the absorption of Greek and Egyptian thought ; so to-day in India will knowledge of the Christ be enriched by Eastern literature. The heritage of the East will but enhance the beauty of the Christian gem, and make it a thing of greater worth to us, the owners.

Every system of thought unfolded by mankind can be found in embryo in one or other of India's systems. So too can be found a beauty and wealth of devotion unparalleled elsewhere in religious history. In her search for the spiritual she has been in deadly earnest. Infinitely more than any country in the world, has she been prepared to pay the price of that search ; has she ' followed ', ' taking up the cross ', and ' forsaking all ' that life counts good.

2. INDIA HAS MUCH TO GAIN IN TURN FROM THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

But if India is so spiritually great is there anything left for her to learn? Is there work for the Westerner to do? Those who answer 'No' are better acquainted with Indian literature than with Indian life. Mother India has grown old—very old. She bears all the symptoms, all the weaknesses of old age. She has forgotten the hope and promise of her youth. She has let routine and the childish fancies of her many children mar her better judgment. Like a brilliant maiden who marries some one of inferior talent and who is forced to become a household drudge, so has the early genius of India been buried beneath superstition, idolatry, custom. Had she only kept her vision through all misfortune, and combined with it a firmer discipline in the training of her children, she, rather than the Jews, might have brought the highest revelation to mankind.

Who, to-day, even of those belonging to her, know the hope and promise of her youth?—perhaps a scholar here and there, or a saint hidden in the jungle. Yet though her truth is buried beneath superstition and idolatry, though the hearts of her children are bound by rigid custom, they too inherit a tendency towards, a capacity for, the spiritual. They have deep and spontaneous insight into truths presented to them. Thus if Mother India herself has failed in her duty to her children, must not the task of teaching them fall to the West?

Yes, we of the West come to teach, but we also come to learn. In trading with our talent we find that it is doubled. Christianity adapted to Indian thought, re-interpreted through Indian thought, attains much fuller meaning. Man's spiritual goal, the Cross by which he gains it, stand out in clearer light to us as we learn how thinker, poet, mystic, ascetic, strove in the past in different manner to define them . . . And surely their definitions, in turn, attain much fuller meaning by the Christian message.

3. GOD IS LOVE

The message is such that a child can understand. God needs man. He not only owns and values, but has a personal love for man. Like a man having a hundred sheep, who having lost one of them, leaves the ninety and nine in the wilderness and searches till he finds it; and when he has found it layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing; so doth God need, and search; and finding, rejoice.

God loves. It is God's love for man that gives to man his worth. Apart from the value put upon the sheep by the shepherd, apart from the loss he sustains, of what value is a sheep? God loves, and this gives man value. The frail infant life in the mother's arms is akin to the animals. It is weaker, more helpless, than the animals; yet to the mother it is of infinite worth. It is her's. It is part of her life. It has, what all else in creation lacks, the potentiality of responding to her deepest nature. So is it with

God. His love needs with the greatest power of His being, the life which, through becoming, can respond to Himself. If the message is so simple that a child can understand it, it is vast enough too, to command respect from the greatest thinker. For the thinker the question arises, How can there be a place for individuality within the One? In defining God as Love, this question receives an answer. There is little individuality in the weakling in the mother's arms, yet love makes it stand apart, both from herself, and from all the world. Thinkers have ever made the mistake of banishing from their abstractions about God, the greatest spiritual quality that they themselves experience. Yet Love, the Love of God brings the only solution possible to the problem of man's individuality. In *The World and the Individual*, Prof. Royce in defining man's individuality shows that, though in all else man is one with God and with the world, yet in his purpose he has individuality. Into the 'harmony' of the purpose of God, there enter the single notes of the individual purpose. The notes are the purposes in time, the whole tune is God's purpose in eternity. But though the thought here is beautiful, it can be asked,—why should music be marred by faltering notes and discords? If God be only purpose, why should He tolerate the miscarriage of His ends by human failures? Is not rather Love the music of God's Soul which craves, even with failures, co-operation, response, the reproduction in another of His own Selfhood?

God is Love. Only thus can we have individuality. True, in our individuality God is still immanent. He is the seed of our personality. He is the Reality which, in sharing, we are real. We are to Him as sons, mirroring in potentiality the same values, the same creative power, the same selfhood, the same capacity for love.

If Love finds value in others, so does it create value. The helpless weakling in the mother's arms is worth more to her than all the world. So does her patience and care, her service and self-annihilation, in the course of time result in wakening response. Thus though our life, our possibilities, the type which guides our becoming, our reality, our inherent value, what we have and are, are all the Father's being, His heritage, His gifts, His care, His encircling thought; yet He, the Transcendent as well as the Immanent, with the infinite patience of Love stands aside to serve, to wait, to nourish; not intruding his own Personality, but, like the mother, guarding with longing and with humility, the stirring of the other selfhood. The goal of this self-annihilation is attained when the child has learnt to appreciate it, and finally to realize it in a love as selfless and as true.

Thus should the history of becoming selfhood be also the history, on the Divine side, of a seeking, serving, self-annihilating God; and on the human side, of dawning realization of surrounding Love, dawning response, ever-deepening craving, illumination and at last self-giving, self-renunciation, attainment.

But thus has it been. God is Love—is not Nature His witness, Nature which serves, which delights, which develops man's dawning faculties ?

God is Love—are not holy men His witness, for they come to deepen in man his spiritual faculties ?

God is Love—is not Christ His witness, for in Him did the fulness of Love seek, even in self-annihilation, to awaken in man entire response ?

4. MAN'S DAWNING REALIZATION OF SURROUNDING LOVE

Thus too, on the human side, has it been. Men have felt stirring within, the realization of the Divine. Among many races, in many climes, there has been this stirring. India, no less than Israel, has through her own inward experience responded to God's Love. More complete, more passionate, more selfless indeed, has often been her response. Israel learnt to realize the Divine discipline, and to learn the moral lessons needed for humanity's growth in sonship. It had fleeting visions of the Fatherhood of God—but of a Fatherhood that was stern, restricted, apart, righteous ; oft revengeful in upholding His authority. The spirituality of Israel was marred too by the hope of material prosperity, and temporal rule. Not without long years of sorrow and exile, could Israel learn that it was more truly in humility and long-suffering than in earthly greatness, that Jehovah's 'Suffering Servant' manifested forth His Glory.

But in India, dawning realization has been of God not only transcendent, but immanent ; of God within,

God as the Divine Seed, God as man's Reality, a realization, a stirring, an awakening, an urging, a striving to define ; and time and again, all but an attaining the Divine Goal.

Thus it was said, ' The East has a message for the West.'

The East has an intellectual message. It can mark out the scope and direction of Spiritual Realization. It can teach that man's source and goal is God : and that God is found within. It can teach that man's own act and will, his individuality, is the only power in heaven and earth that hides, though it can reveal this Reality. It can teach that man's only good is to find Him ; that, other than spiritual discernment, no motive should animate his action, no end belief.

But the East does not stop with the intellectual message. Through suffering unspeakable, through renunciation of the world, and all the world counts dear ; through ' hating ' the temporal self in the search for the eternal self, it has foreshadowed the Cross. And while scarcely formulating the FACT of God's self-annihilating Love, it has tried to respond to God's Love in complete self-giving.

PART I

INDIA'S SEARCH

CHAPTER I

SPIRITUAL REALIZATION DEFINED

1. SPIRITUAL REALIZATION THE AIM AND GOAL OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

WHAT is meant by Religion ?

It can be defined under the two headings of formal belief, and ethical progress. Under the first heading might be traced the history of the purifying of belief, from primitive religion, to the philosophical conceptions of the Absolute. Under the second heading might be traced through the history of the prophets, ethical progress as the kernel within belief ; and it, might be shown how there grew up the consciousness that life must mirror God before intellect can truly define Him.

But this definition, even though it embraces all belief and all conduct, does not truly define religion. Religion is an unfolding of human personality ; which unfolding for want of better terminology we must call 'Spiritual Realization'. What we believe and what we do are but partial aspects of this unfolding. It is towards this, towards Spiritual Realization, that the religions and philosophies of the world have ever groped. It is Spiritual Realization only that can satisfy the demands of intellect ; as only it can transform conduct into an ideal type. The greater includes

the lesser. Belief and conduct still play an important part in Spiritual Realization, but this part is more an instrumental one. It is more a discipline towards a greater end than the end itself. The **END** is the transfiguration of belief within **EXPERIENCE**, and of conduct within **SPIRITUAL RE-BIRTH**.

Spiritual Realization means a new perspective. It is a wider outlook, and a vaster experience. It is—as we have just called it—**TRANSFIGURATION** of a human vista, and of human aims and motives, into experience of the Divine.

2. AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE MEANING OF SPIRITUAL REALIZATION

A parallel to what I mean by Spiritual Realization can be found in the comparison between the outlook of the ordinary man in the street and the perspective of an Idealist philosopher.

The ordinary man is shut in within the circle of a horizon formed by space, time, and the material. Circumstances, events, and things possess for him very concrete reality. No disappointment or suffering, no testing of the hollowness of life's pleasures, no experience of transience, decay and death, shake his belief in this reality. Its foundations totter again and again, but with the blindness of an animal following an instinct that has failed without perceiving that it has failed, he rebuilds upon the ruins ; or at last is crushed himself by the transience of time.

The illustration will hold for what is meant by religious beliefs that find their setting in a concrete

world of space and time and the material; for beliefs that are less than VISION, and religion that is less than spiritual rebirth. How then does Vision transform Belief? How does the perspective of Idealistic Philosophy alter the point of view of the man in the street?

Let us see what this perspective is.

Far away from human habitation up in the hills of Assam a lonely traveller sits upon a slope overlooking a valley. The hills rise tier upon tier; wooded slopes with glittering snake-like lines and foam-like sprays, where streams run down and burst on rocks and vanish in the valley far beneath. Then the mists fall. Where had been entrancing beauty now is impenetrable greyness. But not for long. The mists are lifting. Slowly they rise, setting in cloud-like tufts upon the peaks—and pass. Once more the hills in lustrous shimmering green emerge, like fairy land behind a curtain that is slowly drawn aside; beautiful, enthralling. Perhaps only the cooly with his load had ever passed that way before AND FOR HIM THE SCENE WAS NOT.

Why is it that for him the scene does not exist? HAS THE CHANCE COMING OF THE TRAVELLER CREATED ALL THIS BEAUTY, THIS CONTOUR, THE SPARKLE OF DROPPING WATERS? Subtract the seeing eye, the chemical combustion which makes colour possible, the balance of association in the mind which gives harmony of form, the æsthetic sense which makes sparkle and foam things of beauty, and WHAT REMAINS? We subtract them in the cooly's mind

and there remains the heavy pressure that the hills call forth, Force . . . he knows not how to define it—he only feels the load. THE MOUNTAINS AS THEY EXIST FOR THE TRAVELLER DO NOT EXIST FOR THE COOLY. THE SOMETHING THAT EXISTS IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE LATTER IS OF A MUCH LOWER ORDER THAN THE SPIRITUAL FACTORS THAT EXIST FOR THE TRAVELLER. It requires little demonstration to prove that these spiritual factors are purely subjective. Beauty, determination of form and contour depend upon an artistic sense, a subtle appreciation, that all men alike do not share. The beauty of one age, of one society, of one individual, is not the beauty of another. Even to the uninitiated in philosophical subtleties it must seem plausible that beauty belongs less to an external order than to a seeing judgment, a combining faculty, a thinking mind.

3. THE GREATER THE SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT THE RICHER IS THE UNIVERSE

But the rose is beautiful—says someone. I know—but what is the rose? A dynamic of movement, which though far exceeding the 'rate' of human vision appears stable, of definite form, of particular colour. Colour is determined by the proportion of the speed of waves of light to the rate of vision. Thus just as my mind grows giddy following the movement of a whirling ball, and so movement becomes visualized as a whole, and the whirl interpreted as a mass, so does the world appear stable through our imperfect vision. It is interesting to imagine the result of

increasing our power of grasping movements, i.e., our rate of visualizing or interpreting messages to the brain. The microscope might give us a hint of the new world we would thus find within the world we know. But even the microscope would not express the entire change—a change from form to formlessness, from stability to movement, from beauty and order to a meaningless whirl. The particular construction of the human brain which acts as a kind of wireless receiver of dynamic messages determines that in sorting, combining, classifying, the messages receive form, externality, independence, beauty and order. And when one would argue further that this whole, this dynamic creation, is transmitted to us purely subjectively, who is going to say that on the given premises the argument is wrong? The universe we know is transmitted through such a sorting, combining, classifying of dynamic messages, and because in the classifying there is a further association called externality, there are no purely logical grounds for cancelling the subjective fact. The universe as we know it, the flowers as we see them, waterfall, mist, and mountain slope, spring from the combined and classified whole which human personality creates, and who is going to get behind time and space and form, to judge whether the dynamic message itself has other than this spiritual nature, and comes to us except subjectively? In short, the mountains as they exist for the traveller, beauty, order, the universe in space and time as we experience it, (or less paradoxically stated ALL SPIRITUAL SEEING) are determinations

of the individual faculty. It is only by an abstraction that the determinations of faculty—which we have come to classify as a universe rich in colour, sound and scent, profuse with marvellous forms, wondrous in its vastness and depth of wisdom,—that this determination of faculty is considered as existing apart from faculty. What is really the case, the more complete the construction which the dynamic receiver called the human brain unifies in vision and thought, the greater the beauty that the reclining stranger finds on the mountain slope; or what is the same thing, the more intensely objective the universe appears to become, so much the more messages dart forth—creative, inexplicable messages, strange, elusive, intertwining spiritual forces—from the SUBJECT.

But it may be said, something exists for the cooly;—mountains stripped perhaps of beauty, but yet something that brings resistance to his progress, and holds concealed dangers; an objective something independent of his faculties and seeing judgment. So also no doubt something exists for faculty other, and less than conscious thought as humanity experiences it. WHAT EXISTS is still relative to the experience and outlook of the FACULTY concerned. And the universe that is objective to the fly—or if you will—to the cooly, is no less a construction of fly-faculty or of cooly-faculty, than is the infinitely more extensive universe that appears to be objective to the thinker. Imagination can only play idly with the idea of what the mountains must mean within the dynamic construction of the fly mind. Yet had we never been

told of waterfalls and slopes and shimmering grass had we not the potentiality of seeing beauty of form and colour ; were we, too, insects with insect outlook and experience, could we argue for the objectivity of the universe that man knows ? Nay, rather, would it not appear a phantasy, and reality but those aspects of insect consciousness that unfold its nature and its life ?

This then is the perspective of Idealism, viz., that what seems objective to us is relative to our subjective faculties. That is to say, the world of human experience is determined by the mysterious powers of the human brain.

It may even be true that externality itself is but an aspect of the unfolding of those powers :—just as the vision of the stranger would appear to be so from the point of view of a lower type of consciousness.

4. THE WORLD OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE IS SPIRITUAL

We are just receivers, spiritual centres, possessing faculties to sort, combine, arrange and respond to spiritual forces. These spiritual forces seem encrusted in time, space, form. Our receiving faculties too have cast out tentacles into this encrusted region :—sight, hearing, touch. But however sense-bound our consciousness may be, however much a material ' OTHER ' seems to be set up over and against our faculty ; this other, even possessing no more quality for us than bare definition and enumeration, and these senses, are still determinations of the subjective dynamic receiver.

Let us by way of further illustration imagine someone objecting to this and arguing that, e. g., the sunset is 'there' even when it is absent from my individual experience of it. All that this means is that the sum total of the SPIRITUAL FORCES—whether yet undefined, or defined by human experience as bare being, or defined in fuller quality or meaning—is 'there' for my and kindred experiences of it. Who knows what hidden beauty is present even within the sunset we experience—a beauty that mankind has not yet recorded? Perhaps some marvellous hue is there, something more marvellous than fire and gold and purple streaks of light.

Let us imagine that it is so and that through some new chemical factor being developed in our human brain this marvellous hue becomes revealed to us. Would any one argue that this hue is objectively there, when its existence is relative to some potential faculty? So if the sunset WE see is relative to OUR present faculties, and does not exist AS SUCH for a lower or different type of faculty, who can condemn the Idealist who reminds us that the objective phenomena we fancy so real are definitions of spiritual forces, which exist in this particular form of definition only through the creative synthetic power of the human mind.

We have gone a long way from the point of view of the man in the street who sees a substantial world of space and time and the material, set up over and against his consciousness. We have arrived at experiences within dynamic receivers, experiences determined by faculties, and relative to the nature of

the faculties. And all we know about these experiences is that they come from the depths of Creative Mind—from Spirit and the Spiritual—which if Other-than-self, is yet so akin to self as to speak the language that self knows.

5. SPIRITUAL VISION IN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

This vision of a spiritual universe illustrates the new perspective that comes with the religious experience that we have called Spiritual Realization. For this experience there is no fixed, stable or material. All things are seen in God.

The self too is again the chief instrument in bringing about this transvaluation of values, this perspective, this spiritual reality behind life. God enters or not into our objective experience according as we have capacity to see Him.

Spiritual Realization can then be defined as the awakening of the soul to the God-Presence, and the sharing of the soul in the God-Life.

CHAPTER II

THE MANY AND THE ONE

1. THE PROBLEM OF THE MANY AND THE ONE

'ALL things are seen in God.' The phrase—the MANY in the ONE—itself implies a contradiction. It is not an easy thing to see, much less is it easy to understand all things in relationship to God. The man in the street, whose opinions we were considering in the last chapter, cannot see and understand, because his outlook is bounded by the 'Many.' For him the ONE does not exist—or if He exists, His relationship to the Many, spiritualizing and unifying the Many, does not. But for those too who can see the Many in spiritual unity with God, there are difficulties. It is important to notice these difficulties as the unwary soon get caught in their philosophic maze if not prepared for them. Briefly stated, the problem they involve would seem to be, allowing that the Many are spiritual and their unity is God, do THEY then EXIST? Are they not the SHADOW and the ONE the SUBSTANCE?

At the very outset of our study of Spiritual Realization we must be prepared for all the implications that our definition holds. 'All things,' implying the distinct, the Many, cannot be slurred over. The man in the street has some justification in being materialistic in his outlook. So too the thinker who

affirms the One, only by negating the Many, has a logical justification for his argument. 'All things IN GOD' gives emphasis to the unity implied—a unity which would seem to absorb all differences.

Let us see if we can bring to the problems thus stated some solution.

2. THE UNITY OF THE MANY

The Many are only apparently distinct. Take anything that seems the furtherest removed from ourselves, most unlike ourselves—a tree, a solar system, a clump of earth, and think out the invisible links that bind these things to us. Think out the unfolding history of time, and the unity that runs through all becoming. Think out the common elements of all being. And then look back into the becoming of the human individual, into the embryo life, and beyond the embryo into the chemical and physical beginning of life. Do we not find thus a unity throughout all life, all form, all being,—a unity in the dynamic creative force that combines the elements into the suns that roll in space, and into the human, thinking, loving, willing, man. Yes, surely a great unity binds all created forms, all time, all space, all being.

So again, the many are not distinct when their END is accomplished and their meaning recorded. The words of a book appear distinct, i.e., marked off in signs and symbols; but the mind of the reader links them up in living thought, and makes the clean cut lines of separation vanish. So have different 'words'

appeared—the diversity of forms in time—suns, worlds, manifold manifestations of life, unfolding intelligence. But when the thinker comes, who catches up all being within the unity of his spirit, who finds a common denominator for the whole in the relationship it stands to his own consciousness, then do the clean cut lines of separation vanish in an end accomplished, a meaning recorded.

If all being is bound together in its becoming, so is it bound together in the interpretation cast back upon the process by man's spirit—its goal and end. Man's spiritual being is not a superstratum upon becoming but is the invisible mould (to change the metaphor) that has fashioned becoming, has marked off forms, and has left its impress upon all diversity of being. It has not come to be at one point of time in his existence when he feels the power of thought and will, but was there potentially in infant faculties, and before that in the germ of life, and before that in the forces that pressed on towards his being. Just as it springs far back, out of the first elements of the individual becoming when there is feeling but not thought, so is its source even farther back when feeling itself is but the potentiality of the living germ. Man's spirit has a larger span than the span of consciousness. It exists potentially in the fashioning of the organ which will subsequently be its home. It exists, with these organs, as potentiality within the invisible germ. And if thus far back, why not further? Is all being a unity and yet spirit something apart? The water-lily floats upon the clear surface, but its beauty springs from

the life-force of the roots down in the mud. Its beauty is the expression of the life-force. No other interpretation of the unity of flower and root, of phenomena so diverse is possible. The power which culminates in a flower establishes this end through the relation to stem and root. And at the same time the end attained, the flower, casts back an altogether new value and meaning upon the stem and roots, and the purpose and quality of the life-force.

There is then in this unity which binds all being a two-fold character. It is a unity of process, a movement towards the unfolding of spirit; and it is itself inherently spiritual; it is a gradation of spiritual values. It is not merely the fancy of the poet that is expressed in the mother's reply to the child—who asks where he came from,—when she says,

‘In all my hopes and my loves, in the life of my mother you have lived.

In the lap of the deathless spirit who rules our home you have been nursed for ages.

You have floated down the stream of the world's life and at last you have stranded on my heart.

As I gaze on your face mystery overwhelms me.

You who belong to all have become mine’¹.

Where did I come from? I can look back and associate what I am with the promise and hope of my youth. I can look further back into the earliest recollections of my consciousness in childhood. Perhaps I can trace in imagination the various tendencies that

¹ Rabindranath Tagore, *The Crescent Moon*, p. 16.

united to form my character and individuality. But my history does not end here even though my mind cannot follow itself back beyond these bounds. The development of the organization that made self possible, and further back the emergence of matter out of the fiery masses that roll in space, are all part of MY history. So in some inexplicable way MY SELF thus defined becomes THE MANY. I and they, I in my self-conscious spirit-life, and I as I stir in the womb of time, are a unity, as root, stem, and flower of water-lily are a unity. Selfhood as being the promise and hope, the purpose and striving of all becoming, gives unity to the Many.

3. HOW FAR IS UNITY OF THE MANY UNITY WITH GOD?

But the question we set out to answer was, how far is it possible to see the Many in their Unity WITH GOD? in their Unity in GOD'S SELFHOOD? in their culmination or entirety, in a PERFECT SPIRITUAL SELF-CONSCIOUS LIFE?

The plain spoken, plain-seeing man cannot see it thus. He calls a spade a spade, a material universe just a material universe: and self, through such a unity as we have defined, of the nature and quality of the material.

But this is an impossible attitude for the thinker. If we gather up the sum-total of being into a spiritual unity that we experience as self, the problem still remains to harmonize the relationship of self in its imperfection, its limitation, and becoming, with a

perfect Unity and Source of Spirit ; but we cannot deny that most concrete of all experience—our own spiritual being, our own personality,—to affirm the secondary reality of the material shadows cast by this self as it unfolds in time. To deny the spiritual in order to affirm the material does not do justice to experience. But so too, to identify the Many in their imperfections and becoming, with God, the perfect and complete, does not solve the problem. We are not God, much less is the universe in its imperfection and becoming, God. How see the Many in their Unity with God ?

4. DIVERSITY AND UNITY

Fatherhood is a human term and a human relationship. But its very familiarity ought not to detract from the uniqueness of the logical fact it defines—the fact that unity can pass into diversity and can yet retain its unity ; while at the same time diversity that is only by reason of the one, can yet be counted other than the one.

The father's being remains a unity even though it unfolds in the life of his sons. The sons have very real individualities even though all they are and have can be traced to the father's life. With this experience of fatherhood and sonship before our minds, we cannot approach the problem of the Many and the One determined logically to define diversity as a directly opposing term to unity.

It is this mistake of overlooking the unity that is yet compatible with diversity, the unity between father and

son, and of holding to the logical conception of unity and diversity, that arises in trying to comprehend the relationship between all things and God. This is especially true of Pantheism in its many forms, both ancient and modern. Pantheism finds no more in unity than ONENESS. The waves are no other than the sea, the sea than the waves. Such unity has no place for diversity. But it is not such a unity as this that LIFE brings. A living unity is not Oneness. It has been said that no two leaves of a tree are absolutely alike. The infinite variety that arises within one type teaches that individualization in some degree (what might be called a uniqueness, a newness, an OTHER to the parent life)—is present even in the humbler living forms. And if in the lower, much more in the higher. The relationship between father and son is its highest expression. It is a qualitative and not a quantitative unity. The son has the quality of being of the father ; but yet, OTHERHOOD, INDIVIDUALITY, VALUE FOR SELF. This unity is not quantitative, like the redistribution of the waves in the sea. Through sharing the quality of being of the parent the child possesses the very power that makes him other than the parent : other to the extent even of distorting the nature of the parent. The son of the artist has got more of the quality of the artist than has the painting ; but the artist has much less certainty of self-expression in his son than on the canvas.

Now we find ourselves, and not only ourselves but all nature, more resembling the son of the Artist than His painting. We feel stirring in self the quality or

germ of the Highest. This quality we see too in every wayside flower, in the beauty and wonder of tree, bird, butterfly, and every living form. But neither we, nor they, express the perfect painting. The Highest in us is marred by our own weakness and failure. We feel it and know it only too well. Human life does not represent a Divine Self-expression and a Divine Thought. Its suffering, its injustice, its inequalities, its passions, its degradations, represent the failure of the Divine. So too in the realm of the sub-human. Activity is animated by a Force less spiritual than that which the human mind itself experiences ; and therefore much less than that experienced by the Divine. We find for example the marvels of growth and process accompanied with such purposelessness, such cruelty, such destructiveness, such experimentation and elimination, such groping and chance, as more than negates the suggestion that intelligence, even at the level of the human, is there at work. It is a false philosophy that emphasizes purpose, and minimises aimlessness ; that draws attention to design, and overlooks chance ; that rhapsodises on the glories of creation, and banishes from the field of vision and of consciousness the horrors, the cruelties, the terrors, the anguish, that pervade reality. It is possible for me to conceive myself so careless of sensitive life as to crush some living form under my foot ; or so cruel as to mangle some bird or beast for sport or merchandise. But to crush, to mangle, do not represent the ideal I would choose for my mentality. Is the Absolute, then, the Great Sea, the waves of which flow on in

suffering, evil, waste, failure, confusion, so much less moral, less pitiful than I?

5. FATHERHOOD AND SONSHIP

The only solution to the problem is through applying the conception of Fatherhood to God. It is true that in defining God as Father we apply a human term and a human relationship to the Divine. But we obtain from the analogy an idea of relationship that is wider than the merely human, an idea of the harmony of unity and diversity, of the One and the Many, within life. No other conception of unity escapes the suggestion that we are but the form that the ripples and waves take on the sea. Nor does any other conception of unity harmonize the discordances that exist between the human ripples and the Divine Sea. Through this conception we can interpret discordances as **SPRINGING FROM** the Divine Origin of nature, not as the work and Will of the Divine Artist (to return to the former illustration) but through the germ or quality of the Highest making for individuality or value for self, in every manifestation of nature. In relation to the individuality of His Son, the Father can do no more than guide, assist, modify, and bring indirect, rather than direct, influences to bear. Yet such 'limitation' does not mean an ultimate loss. To give life is to gain. The Father is made richer by His Son.

To see all things in God, then, means to see the Father's Type striving for expression in the Son; something of the Type, even in the lowest form of sonship. If He appears hidden it is because the

Many are REAL ENOUGH to have value for self, as He has value ; REAL ENOUGH to limit and distort Him.

To see all things in God is to see the finite in its INFINITY. It is to see the material and the fixed transfigured by their DIVINE MEANING and their SPIRITUAL TYPE.

CHAPTER III

THE SEARCH FOR THE SPIRITUAL

1. THE MYSTIC'S EXPERIENCE OF THE DIVINE

MYSTICISM is a term given to the search for and the realization of the Spiritual. To unfolding spiritual experience and spiritual re-birth, the mystic in every age and clime has borne witness. And in his search the mystic has ever been prepared to deny the world, to undergo severe discipline, and in mental concentration to seek for contact with the transcendent Reality.

As it has been defined ;—‘Mysticism shows itself not merely as an attitude of mind and heart, but as a form of organic life. It is not a theory of the intellect or a hunger, however passionate, of the heart : but a definite and peculiar development of the whole self, conscious and unconscious, under the spur of such a hunger : and a remaking of the whole character on high levels, in the interests of the transcendental life. The mystics are emphatic in their statement that spiritual desires are useless unless they involve the movement of the whole self towards the Real.’¹ And again, ‘It has been well said that such a search is not “the quest of joy,” but the “satisfaction of a

¹ E. Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 107.

craving impelled by the spur of necessity." This craving is the craving of the soul, unable to rest in those symbols of the sensual world which only feed the little tract of normal consciousness, to attain that fulness of life for which she was made: to lose herself in that which can be neither seen nor touched: giving herself entirely to this sovereign object without belonging either to herself or to others: united to the unknown by the most noble part of herself and because of her renouncement of knowledge: finally drawing from this absolute ignorance a knowledge which the understanding knows not how to attain.¹

While individual mystics differ greatly in outlook and mental characteristics, in social heritage and religious beliefs, there is nevertheless something similar in their method of search for the spiritual life. The stages of this search are sometimes viewed as a three-fold process, sometimes seven-fold. In the Yōga system in India they are still further subdivided. Miss Underhill classifies them as a five-fold process.²

According to her classification, the first stage is the awakening of the self to consciousness of Divine Reality. The second stage is purgation, where, through discipline and mortification, it strives to be free of the illusion and sin which separates it from this Reality. Having become detached from the bondage of sense, in the third stage it attains the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

² *Ibid.*, p. 205 ff.

Divine Vision. Yet even this Vision is not the soul's final goal. Vision brings the further impulsion towards attainment of actual participation in the Real. This impulsion (surrender) involves the mortification of the very core of selfhood, the feelings and the will. 'As in purgation the senses were cleansed and humbled, and the energies and interests of the self were concentrated upon transcendental things : so now the purifying process is extended to the very centre of selfhood, the will. The human instinct for personal happiness must be killed. This is the spiritual crucifixion so often described by the mystics : the great desolation, in which the soul seems abandoned by the Divine. The self now surrenders itself, its individuality, and its will, completely. It desires nothing, asks nothing, is utterly passive, and is thus prepared for Union, the true goal of the mystic quest.' ¹

This fifth stage is nothing less than Oneness with the Divine.

The parallel of the mystic search in India is very striking. As we shall see later in a closer study of the Yōga system, the 'means of escape' involve abstentions from evil ; observances in self-discipline, in study, and devotion ; contemplation, accompanied by certain aids in fixing attention upon the idea sought ; and finally concentration, in which is 'the fusion of the knower and the process of knowing, with the object to be known.'

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 205-6.

It does not seem to be just to Indian mysticism to count Union or Oneness with the Infinite 'total annihilation' (as Miss Underhill, does in common with most European writers) any more than to count the new experience which the Western mystic enjoys 'annihilation' just because the sensing self, the feeling and willing self is considered to be dead. What Miss Underhill calls 'the dark night of the soul,'—the period of surrender—is but a different type of symbolism for the final dissolution of the smaller selfhood, the selfish selfhood that the Hindu mystic also strove to express in his complex metaphysical phraseology. No doubt this phraseology is remarkably difficult for the Westerner to understand. But how few go to the fountain head and strive to understand it! How many are satisfied with what the West has always believed the East to mean, though the East, time and again, protests that it means nothing of the kind! Stated simply, the goal of the Yōgi is, having got rid of passion, selfish egotism, and even an intellectual relationship with the phenomenal, to attain to the 'isolation' of Pure Thought; to the 'endless knowledge' found when the 'energy of intellect' is 'grounded in itself.'¹ Just as 'the rays of the moon shine out when freed from a dense veil of cloud,' so is this energy of intellect, this endless knowledge, when freed from obscuring defilements.'

¹ *The Yōga System of Patañjali*, translated by J. H. Woods (Harvard Oriental Series). Concluding sections.

It will be seen later what other expressions of Union or spiritual attainment can be found in the manifold systems of India; but this of Patañjali's Yōgi, in lonely seclusion 'isolated' within the infinite of Thought, may serve as illustrating the inaptness of describing it 'annihilation.'

2. ATTAINMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL DIFFERS IN ITS EXPRESSION BY THE EASTERN AND WESTERN MYSTIC

Though the search for the spiritual is the purpose of both the Eastern and Western mystic, attainment means to each a very different thing. As we have seen, attainment to the Yōgi means abstraction; the attainment of a great unrelated ocean of abstract thought. On the other hand, attainment to the Christian mystic has ever meant a death of the narrow self, issuing in new Resurrection-Life. Death but makes possible contact with the storehouse of Divine Energy, inflow of a great Dynamic Power. 'But if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelleth in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you.'¹

'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they

¹ St. Paul's Epistle to Romans, viii. 10, 11.

that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh, with the passions and the lusts thereof. If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk.'¹

Christ, His Birth, His Life, His Death, His Resurrection all become for the Christian mystic a spiritual symbolism, a spiritual language, through which the concreteness of the latter's own experience can find utterance. In the following passage taken from St. Augustine, we find in this very language ideas that the Hindu mystic of the Upaniṣads has often reiterated: the idea of God found within the heart, and the idea that all that is not God is vain. But with the concluding plea of the Saint to teach those who know this not; and thus to teach because of the very Spirit attained by self, because of a burning with the fire of charity that the Spirit brings within; this idea diverges from what the Hindu means by Realization.

'If bodies please thee', writes the Saint, 'praise God on occasion of them and turn back thy love upon their Maker; lest in these things which please thee, thou displease. If souls please thee, be they loved in God; for they too are mutable, but in Him are they firmly stablished; else would they pass, and pass away. In Him then be they beloved;² and carry unto Him along with thee what souls thou canst, and say to them, Him let us love, Him let us love; He made these, nor is He far off.—They are of Him, and in Him. See there He is, where truth is loved. He is within the

¹ St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, v. 22-25.

² Compare with *Bṛhad Upaniṣad* quoted in next chapter.

very heart, yet hath the heart strayed from Him. Go back into your heart, ye transgressors, and cleave fast to Him that made you. Stand with Him, and He shall stand fast. Rest in Him and ye shall be at rest. Whither go ye in rough ways? Whither go ye? The good that you love is from Him; but it is good and pleasant through reference to Him; and justly shall it be embittered, because unjustly is any thing loved which is from Him if He be forsaken for it. To what end then would ye still, and still, walk these difficult and toilsome ways? There is no rest where ye seek it. Seek what ye seek:—but it is not there WHERE ye seek. To seek a blessed life in the land of death; but it is not there. For how should there be a blessed life where life itself is not?

‘But our true Life came down hither, and bore our death—; and He thundered calling aloud to us to return hence to Him into that secret place, whence He came forth to us;—first into the Virgin’s womb, wherein He espoused the human creation, our mortal flesh, that it might not be for ever mortal.—He lingered not, but ran, calling aloud by words, deeds, death, life, descent, ascension, crying aloud to us to return unto Him. And He departed from our eyes, that we might return into our heart, and there find Him. For He departed, and lo, He is here.—For He departed thither, whence He never parted, because the world was made by Him. And in this world He was, and into this world He came to save sinners, unto whom my soul confesseth, and He healeth it, for it hath

sinned against Him. O ye sons of men, how long so slow of heart? Even now, after the descent of Life to you, will ye not ascend and live?—Descend, (i.e., from pride of heart) that ye may ascend to God. For ye have fallen by ascending against Him. *Tell them this, that they may weep in the valley of tears, and so carry them up with thee unto God : because out of His Spirit thou speakest thus unto them, if thou speakest, burning with the fire of charity.*¹

Quotations which show that attainment to the Western mystic means spiritual productiveness could be multiplied beyond number.

‘The fourth degree of love is spiritually fruitful’, said Richard of Saint Victor, ‘wherever we find a sterile love, a “holy passivity” we are in the presence of quietistic heresy, not of the Unitive Life.—’ ‘Oh my sisters,’ says Saint Teresa, ‘Who can describe the point to which a soul, where our Lord dwells in so special a manner neglects her own ease? How little honours affect her. How far she is from wishing to be esteemed in the least thing. When she possesses the ceaseless companionship of her Bridegroom how could she think of herself? Her only thought is to please Him, and to seek out ways in which she may show Him her love. It is to this point, my daughters, that orison tends; and in the design of God, this spiritual marriage is destined to no other purpose but the INCESSANT PRODUCTION OF WORK, WORK. And this, as I have already told you,

¹ *Confessions*, Bk. 4, XII (emphasis mine.)

is the best proof that the favours which we receive have come from God.’¹

Although it is difficult to make a generalization in a country as vast as India, where have evolved systems of thought as varying as Buddhism, Vēdāntism and Vaiṣṇavism, yet the fact remains that all the highest elements in, and finest fruit of, Spiritual Realization have resulted in the contemplative, rather than the active life. And in India itself the poverty, ignorance, disease and degradation which exist, cry aloud condemnation.

As we have seen, in Christian mysticism annihilation of self brings the more complete revitalizing of all the faculties of self in dedicated and devoted service to mankind. And without such devoted service, attainment counts as null and void.

In Hindu mysticism, (making the broad generalization), the Yōgi’s end is ‘isolation’. In lofty loneliness he attains a Great Abstraction:—That which is beyond all sight and sound and touch; beyond, too, all thought (as human thought is understood); beyond all feeling and activity. No wonder that those who thus attain are, as though they are not, to their fellows: and What they experience lies hidden in the depth of their own being.

3. THE FULLEST ATTAINMENT IS THE FREEST GIVING

In such spiritual productiveness the Western mystic seems to have attained the deeper truth. Does a self

¹ The quotation is from *Mysticism*, p. 513, 4.

that gains all and gives naught achieve true self-renunciation? In a world where all men need salvation, can the highest be defined as keeping back the light, when the darkness of ignorance and evil passion can be dispelled by giving? Rather than self-renunciation, for an introspective type of mind isolation and contemplation are the most subtle forms of selfishness. Who would not choose—once having tasted the joy of thought—to blind the eyes to the horrors of time, to close the ears to its jarring sounds, to find the silence and the peace that time knows not of? But is such a choice the less selfish?

Moreover, the Great Unity that binds all being, the Great Reality that is the truth of every selfhood, should (it would seem but natural to believe) draw the spirit in attainment into sympathy with all: should impel the spirit through the Light attained, to set alight the Divine spark in the consciousness of another. How can He who permeates all be found, other than in the fullest and richest experience embracing all? It is thus that the Christian mystic seeks for Spiritual Realization. He whom the mystic seeks is not the Unmanifest, an Unknown Abstraction, but the Thought revealed through His Spoken Word. Creation in its rich variety, life in its beauty and wonder, mind throwing open the portals of the spiritual, all these reveal Him. He it is who holds communion with His own, with all who seek Him. And when minds were capable of receiving Him, He it was who, in Human Form, brought to man a Personal, Living, Dynamic, experience of the Spiritual.

To get down to the root of the difference between Hindu and Christian attainment, does not this difference begin in the conception of Him whom the mystic seeks to attain? Does not the Ideal, enunciated in religious belief, or in philosophical postulate, determine the nature of the end that is realized?

Therefore is belief, though not the end in the search for the higher life, yet an important constituent in that search. Belief is the map upon which are marked the roads that guide all human attainment.

4. THE NEED IN INDIA FOR RE-STATEMENT OF WHAT THE SPIRITUAL SEARCH SETS OUT TO ATTAIN

Perhaps the greatest need of India has ever been as it is to-day, the need of a clear enunciation of man's spiritual goal; the need of an Ideal worthy of attainment. The Yōgi's life, though it commands reverence from many in India, yet does not appear either practicable, or desirable, as a personal calling for the average Indian. The writer was present at a discussion among Indian college students, as to whether science or philosophy brought the most advantages to mankind. Science, represented as an instrument in the uplift of humanity and as a means to material progress, received many more partisans than philosophy, which, both its adherents and opponents represented as the solitary, transcendental, unprofitable life.

The point is of interest in illustrating, first that the Ideal which India needs must satisfy the practical.

demands of everyday life : second, that the Yōgi and the Ideal for which he stands, are no longer uncriticised, no longer all-sufficient, for the growing thought of Hindus themselves.

What is actually the case in India is that the great potential forces of spirituality, inherited through countless generations, have been left undirected, undeveloped, owing to the master-minds of spiritual thought withdrawing to attain their isolated achievements. These forces of spirituality have then found for themselves an outlet, in the worship of the Unseen under the imagery of a million forms. What in print would read as the greatest spiritual degradation, the grossest spiritual darkness, is found when one comes into personal contact with it, to be the expression of a faith, humility, resignation, that would make many who claim to have more enlightenment, feel ashamed. To give just one illustration:—The writer visited a child terribly smitten with small-pox, and,—what seemed more terrible—found the mother obdurate (as of course the custom is) in refusing medical assistance of any kind. ‘The visitation of the small-pox Goddess must be borne in patient submission; the life of the child rested in the hands of Bhagavan (God).’ In the course of time the child got better. Then the mother’s heart was full of grateful praise to the same Bhagavan, in whose power are all things; and who had spared the precious life.

Superstition, ignorance, idolatry?—yes, these are there in abundance. But faith too is there, and trust;

all that goes to create response to, and appreciation of the spiritual life.

‘And He was filled with compassion for them because they were as sheep not having a shepherd.’¹ Of the many schools of thought of India, where is the authoritative voice of the Shepherd? the Divine Guide? At most, if the Yōgi is a guide to the Spiritual, what is attained in isolation avails only for self, and the multitudes gain nothing. By those engaged in the rush, and noise, and relationships of life, the Shepherd is needed:—some Ideal pointing the way to attainment, enunciating man’s spiritual goal.

For, must there not be a way for the many as well as for the few? Are the doors of the spiritual world not open unto all? How then can the ‘map’ of religious beliefs, once sketched by India’s spiritual leaders, be reconstructed so as to avail for India’s multitudes?

¹ Mark, vi. 34.

CHAPTER IV

SPIRITUAL REALIZATION IN THE BRHAD ĀRANYAKA UPANIṢAD

1. THE UPANIṢADS

INDIAN mysticism at its greatest can be found in the most ancient of the Upaniṣads. It is here we must turn if we wish to understand the contribution that the East has made to the interpretation of spiritual experience. Western thinkers almost invariably make the mistake of identifying one school of philosophical thought with the whole of this interpretation, viz., the philosophy of Śaṅkara. But it is as unfair to identify India's contribution to spiritual experience with Śaṅkara's extreme logic, as it would be to identify Christianity with Hume's Sensationalism, or some outstanding scheme of philosophical thought. As philosophy, the weaknesses in Śaṅkara's theories were exposed by a subsequent Indian thinker, just as the weakness of Hume's system was exposed by Kant. In the eighth century A.D. Śaṅkara erected the great structure of his Māyā (or illusion) doctrine upon texts of the Upaniṣads that had originated some thousand years before. In the twelfth century A.D. it was as effectively refuted by Rāmānuja, as it has been by any modern Western thinker writing on Indian philosophy.

It was in the mists of those past centuries, much further back than either Śaṅkara or Rāmānuja, that India discovered truth for mankind :—a truth greater than reason, that Śaṅkara but tried to rationalize.

To the Upaniṣads then we must turn if we wish to learn the greatest ideas of Indian mysticism.

The Upaniṣads are the Vēdānta or 'End of Vedic literature.' Vedic literature has three parts—the Samhitas, which consist of hymns of praise and prayer to the nature gods; the Brāhmaṇas, which are prose treatises on the sacrifices; and the Āraṇyakas, which are works intended for those who repair to the forest according to the third stage of a Brahmin's life. It is to this section that the Upaniṣads belong.

2. THE 'SECRET DOCTRINE' IN THE UPANIṢADS

As the student begins his study, the mass of allegory and ritual, interwoven with sublime mysticism, may tend to repulse him. He is faced with an extraordinary contradiction.

Professor Deussen in his *Philosophy of the Upaniṣads* brings forwards an interesting theory which explains how these contradictory elements came to exist side by side. He traces the philosophy to the Kṣatriya or nobility caste, and finds in it a reaction from priestly ritual. This philosophy was originally a secret doctrine of the Ātman (Spirit or Self) expressed in brief words or formulæ. The following are illustrations of these phrases :—*Satyasya Satyam*, The Reality of Reality. *Amṛtam satyēna channam*, The Immortal veiled by reality. *Jyōtisām*

jyōtiḥ, The Light of lights. *Param Jyōtis*, The Supreme Light. *Vijñānam Ānandam Brahma*, Brahma is Bliss and Knowledge. *Nēti, Nēti*, That Self is described as No, No. *Tat tvam asi*, Thou art That.

In the course of time the secret doctrine passed from the Kṣatriya caste to the priests. It became attached to the curriculum of their schools and was made part of the Vedic system. Sacrifices and ritual were interpreted as allegories of the Ātman. It is inconceivable (as Prof. Deussen points out) that the opposite is true, and the Ātman doctrine was a development from such heterogenous elements as are found in Vedic ceremonial. Its adaption to them on the contrary is in many cases forced and unreal.

3. THE DOCTRINE OF 'ATTAINMENT' IN THE VĒDĀNTA

The oldest form of the Vēdānta doctrine is (according to Prof. Deussen) to be found in the philosophy of Yājñavalkya in the *Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.¹

The first of these passages is as follows :—

'Now when Yājñavalkya was going to enter upon another state he said—Maitrēyī, verily I am going away from this my house into the forest. Forsooth, let me make a settlement between thee and that Kātyāyani (my other wife).

Maitrēyī said, 'My lord, if this whole earth full of wealth belonged to me, tell me should I be immortal by it ?

¹ The following quotations are taken from Max Muller's translation in *The Sacred Books of the East*.

‘No’ replied Yājñavalkya, ‘like the life of rich people will be thy life. But there is no hope of immortality by wealth.’

And Maitrēyī, said ‘What should I do with that by which I do not become immortal? What my lord knoweth of immortality, tell that to me.’ Yājñavalkya replied, ‘Thou who art truly dear to me thou speakest dear words. Come, sit down. I will explain it to thee and mark well what I say.’

And he said, ‘Verily a husband is not dear that you may love the husband, but that you may love the Self, therefore a husband is dear.’

Verily a wife is not dear that you may love the wife : but that you may love the Self, therefore a wife is dear.

Verily sons are not dear that you may love the sons : but that you may love the Self, therefore sons are dear.’

And so with ‘wealth’—‘the Brahmin class’—‘the Kṣatriya class’—‘worlds’—‘gods’—‘creatures’—‘everything’ :—all these ‘are not dear’ for their own values, for—‘wealth’—for ‘the Brāhmin class’—the ‘Kṣatriya class’—‘worlds’—‘gods’—‘creatures’—‘everything’—but that through them may be loved the Self, therefore ‘all these’ are dear.

‘Verily the Self is to be seen, to be heard, to be perceived, to be marked, O Maitrēyī. When we here perceive and know the Self then all this is known’.

To look for reality other than in the Spirit or Self is to be abandoned by the real. Everything that

exists—position, the worlds, the gods—living creatures,—all is that Self. The reality of all things is seized in that Self. The passage continues :—

‘As all waters find their centre in the sea, all touches in the skin, all tastes in the tongue, all smells in the nose, all colours in the eye, all sounds in the ear, all precepts in the mind, all knowledge in the heart, all actions in the hands, all movements in the feet, and all Vēdas in speech :

‘As a lump of salt when thrown into water becomes dissolved into water and could not be taken out again, but whenever we taste (the water) it is salt ; thus does this Great Being, endless, unlimited, consisting of nothing but knowledge rise from out these elements, and vanish again into them. When he has departed there is no more knowledge ; thus spoke Yājñavalkya.’

Then Maitrēyī said, ‘Here thou hast bewildered me Sir, when thou sayest that, having departed, there is no more knowledge.’ But Yājñavalkya replied, ‘O Maitrēyī, I say nothing that is bewildering, this is enough, O Beloved, for wisdom. For when there is as it were duality then one sees the other, one smells the other, one hears the other, one salutes the other, one knows the other, but when the self only is all this how should he see another,—smell—hear—salute—know another ? How should he know him by whom he knows all this ? How, O Beloved, should he know himself the knower ? ’ ¹

That is to say.—

The individual self, enriched by reality, interpreting reality, all inclusive of reality, transcends at last all objects of knowledge and its own finite form. Thus having attained its true being—a being endless unlimited, it finds Brahman—within as very subject, the Perfect Self.

A second passage brings out this latter point.

4. ATTAINMENT IS WITHIN THE VERY CORE OF SELFHOOD

King Janaka asked Yājñavalkya the question, what is the light of man ?

He answered, the sun—the moon—fire—sound—

Janaka asked, when the sun has set, O Yājñavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire is gone out, and the sound hushed, what is then the light of man ? Yājñavalkya answered ' the Self is his light '—and at Janaka's request he proceeds to define the Self. It is he who is within the heart surrounded by the senses, the person of light consisting of knowledge.—He who transcends this world and all forms of death, as during deep sleep, (suṣupti) finds his true form in this withinness of self ;—' Free from desires, free from evil, free from fear—this indeed is his true form in which his wishes are fulfilled in which the self only is his wish, in which no wish is left ; free from any sorrow. And when it is said that there in the suṣupti he does not see, yet he is seeing though he does not see. For sight is inseparable from the seer, because it cannot perish.—In waking and dreaming

there is as it were another'—but in *suṣupti* where the self finds its true form there is no duality. 'An ocean is that one seer without any duality. This seer is the Brahman world, dwells in Brahman. Thus did Yājñavalkya teach him. This is his highest goal, this is his highest success, this is his highest world, this is his highest bliss, all other creatures live on a small portion of that bliss.' ¹

We have seen that when the Self is transmuted into its reality there is no longer duality in its existence. The objective which at one time formed part of its being has become the Knower. Again, the self in its reality or true form is infinite, is one with the Supreme Self. Yājñavalkya now applies this thought of the non-duality of the self to Brahman. He had asked How should he know him by whom he knows all this? How should he know himself (i.e., as object) who is the knower? In the same sense he denies that the Supreme Subject can be known as object. 'Thou couldst not see the seer of sight—nor know the knower of knowledge. This is thy self who is within all.' ²

'This imperishable one is a seer but is not seen, a hearer but is not heard, a thinker but not thought of, a knower but not known. There is no other seer than this, no other hearer than this, no other thinker than this, no other knower than this. It is in this imperishable one that space is interwoven.' ³

¹ *Bṛh. Up.*, 4, 3.

³ *Ibid.*, 3, 8.

² *Ibid.*, 3, 4.

5. SUMMARY. MAN'S TRUE REALITY IS SPIRITUAL.
SPIRIT CAN BE ATTAINED ONLY IN THE
CORE OF SELFHOOD

From Yājñavalkya's philosophy we can find two great thoughts that carry us far in the study of Spiritual Realization. It may be that the East has not yet learnt to interpret fully and truly its own great heritage. It is certain that the West has never emphasized the points of real value in Eastern mysticism. The points briefly are these.

1. Man's personality has two aspects, the temporal and the eternal. The temporal aspect is that of relationship to a world of objective realities. The eternal aspect is its own realization of spiritual being and spiritual worth. Spiritual being can never be something OBJECTIVE to the Self. As in Suṣupti man must find the great ocean depth of his own subjectivity.

2. Only at this point where man's personality transcends his finite, relative nature can God be known. 'Thou couldst not see the seer of sight'— 'This is thy Self, the Ruler within, the Immortal,' Spiritual Realization reveals Him—BUT THEN AS SUBJECT.

CHAPTER V

SPIRITUAL REALIZATION IN THE *CHĀNDŌGYA UPANIṢAD*

1. THE UPANIṢADS REPRESENT SCHOOLS OF SPIRITUAL REALIZATION.

WHATEVER later writers interpreted 'Unity' to mean, we have seen that to the ancient Rṣis of India it meant no less than entering into the infinitude of one's own selfhood, and through this to God. The Upaniṣads are primarily schools of Spiritual Realization, though there grew out of the teaching of the Rṣis many philosophical systems. It is no doubt true that some definition of unity, some philosophical interpretation of the Rṣis' thoughts was inevitable. But the merely philosophical problem did not exist for India's most ancient philosophers. They fought through to the spiritual possibilities of human personality, and found in such a spiritual reality a Type of the Reality of all finite forms, as well as the Type of God.

2. THE CHĀNDŌGYA UPANIṢAD AND ITS AIM.

We have glanced at the *Bṛhad Aranyaka Upaniṣad*. We will now turn to the *Chāndōgya*, another of the oldest.

The question the Upaniṣad seems to ask and answer is, What is the method, the meaning, and the goal of

Spiritual Realization? As an introduction to this thought the Upaniṣad works out the significance of the Udgītha, the syllable 'ŌM.' 'Let a man meditate on the syllable 'ŌM.' The purpose of concentration of thought on this syllable is in order to draw the mind away from other subjects, and unify it in spiritual contemplation. But what is the object of spiritual contemplation? Is it to be identified with the Vēda? Is it to be identified with the Vital Breath?—With the Sun?—With the ether which is around us, and within us, the All-inclusive Whole?

3. THE DIVINE SELF FOUND IN THE CORE OF MAN'S SELFHOOD.

No, more than all these. The syllable draws the mind through the gates of mystic contemplation into the light of the Swarga (heaven) world. And there, this highest revelation is afforded it: 'That light which shines above this heaven, higher than all, higher than everything in the highest world, beyond which there are no other worlds, that is the same light which is within men.—Let a man meditate on this Brahman which is seen and heard. He who knows this becomes conspicuous and celebrated, yea, he becomes celebrated'.¹ Brahman the All-inclusive Whole the intelligent whose body is spirit, whose form is light, whose thoughts are true, whose nature is like ether (Omnipresent and Invisible) from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed,

¹ *Chāndōgya Up.* section (Prapāṭhaka) 3, Para. 13.

the all embracing, the silent, the calm, 'He is my self within the heart, smaller than a corn of rice, smaller than a corn of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a canary seed, or the kernel of a canary seed. He is also my self within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than the heaven, greater than all these worlds.'¹

There is within the self, did we but penetrate deeply enough into the recesses of our own nature, a capacity for, and type of, the Divine. This is the thought that emerges from language glowing with metaphor, poetry, legend, or indeed sometimes tedious with childlike parallels.

In the sixth section this philosophy is developed under the form of instruction that Uddālaka gives to his son Śvētakētu.

The young man returns at the age of twenty-four having had his education completed. The father says to him: 'Have you ever asked for that instruction by which we hear what cannot be heard, by which we perceive what cannot be perceived, by which we know what cannot be known?'

'What is that instruction, Sir?'

'The father replied, My dear, as by one clod of clay all that is made of clay is known, the difference being only a name arising from speech, but the truth being that all is clay.'

'And as, my dear, by one pair of nail scissors all that is made of iron is known, the difference being only a

name arising from speech but the truth being that all is iron, thus my dear is that instruction.'

'The son said, Surely those venerable men my teachers did not know that, for if they had known it why should they not have told me ? Do you, Sir, therefore tell me that.'

'Be it so, said the father.'

And the highest revelation this instruction affords is that in the True Self everything that exists has its reality, and this True Self is known by man's self within. 'Now that which is that subtle essence (the root of all) in it all that exists has its self. It is the True, It is the Self, and thou O Śvĕtakĕtu art it.' (*Tat tvam asi*).

Once again in the seventh section Sanatkumāra imparting instruction to Nārada, who comes to him for illumination, leads him on step by step to find within the depth of his own selfhood the Infinite Self, the Supreme I.

Nārada summarises all his knowledge and Sanatkumāra tells him that all that he has read is a name:—but there is something better than a name. That which is better than a name is speech; but mind in turn is better than speech. Imagination is better than mind, reflection than imagination, understanding than reflection, vitality than understanding, ether—the source and goal of all—than vitality. Within the ether, memory, hope, and the 'mukhya prāṇa' (the vital breath) i.e., the very witnesses of self, lead man to the highest pinnacle of knowing at which he can arrive. To reach this pinnacle of self is but that he

may understand, believe, and realize, the nature of the True. We penetrate into Self, only in order that within our selfhood, we can attain to consciousness of the Divine. 'In reality he is an *ativādin* (one who is enlightened) who declares the Highest Being to be the True.—The Infinite is Bliss. There is no Bliss in anything finite. Infinity only is bliss. This Infinity we must desire to understand.' 'Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else, that is the Infinite. The Infinite indeed is below, above, behind, before, right and left,—it is indeed all this. Now follows the explanation of the Infinite as the I. I am below, I am above, I am behind, before, right and left. I am all this. Next follows the explanation of the Infinite as the Self. Self is below, above, behind, etc. He who sees, perceives, and understands, loves the Self, delights in the Self, revels in the Self, rejoices in the Self, he becomes a *Swaraj* (one who is free), he is lord and master in all the worlds.'¹

From this vision of the Infinite as I and Self, the Upaniṣad turns again to its Type in the human heart.

'There is this city of Brahman and in it the palace, the small lotus (of the heart), and in it that small ether. Now what exists within that small ether that is to be sought for, that is to be understood. And if they should say to him, Now with regard to that city of Brahman, and the palace in it—and the small ether

¹ *Ibid.*, Sec. 7, paras. 23, 24, 25.

within the heart, what is there within it that deserves to be sought for, that is to be understood ?

‘ Then he should say, as large as this ether (all space) is, so large is that ether within the heart. Both heaven and earth are contained within it, both fire and air, both sun and moon, both lightning and stars and whatever there is of him here in the world and whatever is not, (has been or will be) all that is contained within it.

‘ And if they should say to him, If everything that exists is contained in that city of Brahman, all beings and all desires, then what is left of it when old age reaches it, and scatters it, or when it falls to pieces ? Then he should say, By old age of the body, that does not age, by the death of the body that is not killed. That is the true Brahman city (not the body). In it all desires are contained. It is the Self free from sin, free from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst ; which desires nothing but what it ought to desire, and imagines nothing but what it ought to imagine.

‘ Now as here on earth people follow as they are commanded, and depend on the object which they are attached to, be it a country or a piece of land. And as here on earth whatever has been acquired by exertion perishes, so perishes whatever is acquired for the next world by sacrifices and other good actions performed on earth. Those who depart from hence without having discovered the Self and those true desires, for them there is no freedom in all the worlds. But those who depart from hence after having discover-

and the Self and those true desires, for them there is freedom in all the worlds.' ¹

4. ATTAINMENT IS THROUGH INDIVIDUAL PERSONAL STRIVING

That realization of the Infinite is in a very true sense an individual realization through the activity of will is stated again and again. Meditation on 'Ōm' is a discipline of will. 'According to what a man's will is in this world so will he be when he has departed this life. Let him therefore have this will and belief.' Will makes a man what he wishes to be, and fulfils all his desires. 'He who desires the world of the fathers, by his mere will the fathers come to receive him, and having obtained the world of the fathers he is happy.' Whatever the desire—friends—perfumes—garlands—food—drink—song—music—women—'whatever object he is attached to, whatever object he desires, by his mere will it comes to him, and having obtained it he is happy. And the true desire hidden thus by the false we could also attain did we descend into the heart where Brahman dwells, and were we not carried away by untruth.'²

5. UNITY THUS ATTAINED RESEMBLES RATHER THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF ATTAINMENT THAN THE IDEA OF ANNIHILATION OF PERSONALITY

From *Chāndōgya Upaniṣad* as from *Bṛhad Āraṇyaka* we have seen that the search for the Eternal is within, and in finding the perfection of personality, there is

¹ Sec. 8, Para. 1.

² Sec. 8, Para. 2.

found the Infinite Meaning and Reality of all temporal forms—which is Brahman. But this Unity is a very different kind of Unity from that which Śaṅkara found. Śaṅkara eliminated the Many and found Reality only in the One. The Many were the Māyā or Illusion of the One. From the logical conception of Unity, the quantitative conception of sea and waves, there was perhaps no other course open to him. But he failed to bring out the meaning of the ancient Rṣis by his logic. The waves as they are are the Māyā or appearance of the sea. But the Rṣis never taught that man as he is, forms as they are, are God. Hegel in the West also makes this distinction. Man is God, not as the Māyā of God, but in God-realization, in his own development of the type of God within him, in his becoming. 'Thou art that'. '*Tat tvam asi*'.

Tvam—Thou stands for a finite-infinite. The finite actual self is not '*Tat*'—That. *Tat* is the finite in its infinitude, in its God-realization. It is personality in its perfection, transfigured by its Divine meaning and Type.

This thought approximates to the thought of Unity as defined by the Christian. It is less a logical Unity than a Unity of Life. It is the Unity of Father and Son¹—though the Rṣis never attained to the conception of the Fatherhood of God. The finite possesses the germ or type of the Infinite. A Divine meaning and a Spiritual Essence transfigures the material and the fixed. The world is not Māyā but reality, a reality of which

¹ See above chap. ii.

God is the Type. And this Reality bursts up[॑] within man's personality. 'He is my self within the heart, smaller than a corn of rice, smaller than a corn of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a canary seed, or the kernel of a canary seed. He also is my Self within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than the heaven, greater than all these worlds.'

CHAPTER VI

THE PATH OF REALIZATION AND ITS DIFFICULTIES

1. MISINTERPRETATION OF THE R̥ṢIS THOUGHT THAT THE REALITY OF REALITY IS DIVINE.

THE contribution that the R̥ṣis of ancient India made to the meaning of Spiritual Realization was that the fixed and material have a Divine Type, and the true Reality of the Finite is Infinite.

This truth is a great principle that may be wide enough to cover falsehood. It did cover falsehood in India. The Finite = Infinite. The Fixed and Material = The Divine. Śaṅkara disguised the absurdity involved in the equations by making the Finite and the Material the Illusion of Reality, and the Infinite All. The true equation is—A Finite through development and growth may pass over into the Infinitude of its own source and Type. The world of form and of time is not God. But it has a Divine and Living element that can burst up from within into realization of its Divine Type :—just as the life within the roots down in the mud can burst up into the flower of the water-lily.

While I write, the woods teem with life. The air is filled with the sounds of noisy rooks, and twittering birds, and buzzing insects, while butterflies dart here

and there. A feeling of the intense joy and value of living is expressed by each tiny form. They are frail, no doubt, compared with the Great Source of Life, yet even within their short span they share something of His Perfection and Completeness.—Yes, God is here out in the woods.—Nevertheless, though perfect and complete, they cannot realize the meaning of the life within themselves. They live, and enjoy, and share, but realization can only come with thought. God is here out in the woods :—but not as near as in developed consciousness, not as near as in the thought that looks without to seek Him. And nearest of all—He is found when consciousness attains its greatest depth and perfection.

The truth that the R̥sis imparted was misunderstood by subsequent searchers for the Ideal. The figure of the *suṣupti*—or deep sleep—that originally was meant to illustrate the withinness and depth of the self's reality, helped to bring about this misunderstanding. The *suṣupti* began to be interpreted literally as a way to the Divine. The negative idea gained ground. By eliminating as far as possible all outward relationships, the Yōgi found in an undefined, and undefinable abstract the Goal of attainment. This overwhelmed completely the positive idea of realization that the greatest of the R̥sis had implied. Yājñavalkya did not teach that the great Self, endless, unlimited, consisting of nothing but knowledge, can arise without the elements of knowledge; without some means by which it becomes enriched. He said that by enriching the human self, by leading men to find a

wider reality, and to love this wider reality, all means:—relationships between husband and wife, parent and child; wealth, position, everything in heaven and earth,—are ‘dear.’ The mistake arises in valuing these things as ends, and not as means; but means, nevertheless they are. From out of these elements—he says—does this great being arise. It is only when the greater unity is attained, that ‘there is no more duality’:—no more need for the objective means of growth. Nothing could be greater than the contrast between what Yājñavalkya really taught, and what the later development of Hinduism practised. To use the illustration of growth.—Yājñavalkya’s philosophy implies that the self—the finite self—is a seed, which by absorbing into itself, and transforming into the living being the elements of the surrounding soil (human relationships, the good that wealth and position etc., can bring) by transcending the material, and developing the living and spiritual dynamic, becomes the reproduction of the Infinite Type. Following up the illustration:—the negative philosophy of the Yōgis would cut open the seed to find in introspection, within the germ of life, its fullest development.

It is not only in relation to India and to the development of Indian philosophy, that it is of value to point out the misapprehensions that can arise in studying the principles of the ancient R̥sis. The Finite is not the equivalent of the Infinite. We cannot find God upon the plane of our own finitude. We find negation—as the Yōgis do—when we look within,

and yet—(and this is the extraordinary contradiction that appears to arise out of the principle of the R̥ṣis)—we can find Him only within. This philosophy of realization is a much greater thing than any superficial interpretation can make of it. The Yōgis lost its meaning through a superficial interpretation. So organized religion in the West also often misses its point. How often is God sought upon the plane of our finitude! How often is religious ritual and formal belief deemed sufficient to find Him! How often do we drug our spiritual being with empty forms of service and distorted figures of truth! We lose the concrete kernel and cherish husks! How seldom is it understood that the aim of religion is a realization of the spiritual. But how?

Did the R̥ṣis themselves grasp the full significance of their own principles? Did they understand all that realization meant? Did they define the Infinite?

2. THE DIFFICULTY OF THE PATH OF REALIZATION.

They knew that the path of realization was hard. 'The sharp edge of a razor is difficult to pass over. Thus say the wise that the path to the Self is hard.'¹ The god Indra is represented in the *Chāndōgya Upaniṣad* as coming to Prajāpati to learn from him the meaning of the Self 'which is free from sin, free from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst.'

¹ *Kaṭha Up.* I. 3.14.

After thirty-two years he learns that 'The person that is seen in the eye, that is the Self.' He (and the demons who are his fellow pupils) understood this to mean the reflection of the Self as seen in a mirror. Prajāpati had meant by the Self the real agent of seeing. Indra goes away but is dissatisfied. He comes back and says to Prajāpati that if the Self is the body, then when the body perishes, does the Self also perish? Prajāpati keeps him another thirty-two years and then teaches him—'He who moves about in dreams he is the Self, this is the immortal, the fearless, this is Brahman.' But although Indra goes away he is not yet satisfied. He sees that though the Self is not now to be identified with the afflictions of the body, yet the Self in dreams can yet become conscious of pain and grief. He returns and tells his difficulty again to Prajāpati. The latter keeps him still another thirty-two years and at the end teaches him:—'When a man being asleep, reposing, and at perfect rest, sees no dreams, that is the Self, this is the immortal, the fearless; this is Brahman.' But Indra on his way back to the gods realizes that this Self in dreamless sleep does not know himself that he exists, nor does he know anything that exists. He has gone to utter annihilation. Once more he returns as a pupil to Prajāpati and asks how annihilation can be true selfhood? He stays five years more, making one hundred and one years in all. Then Prajāpati gives him the final knowledge of the Self, and its contact with the mortal body in which it makes its abode. 'Like as a horse attached to a cart, so is the spirit attached to

this body. 'The eye, the nose, the tongue, the ear, the mind are instruments of the Self, the real agent in seeing, smelling, tasting, hearing, thinking. When the Self perceives in all his Self only, and nothing else, then is the highest light of knowledge attained.' Indra, at last satisfied, returns to the gods and teaches them what he has been taught by Prajāpati.¹

If the Rsis represent Indra as taking one hundred and one years to learn to distinguish between the mortal and the Immortal Self, truly they meant to teach that the path of realization is hard.

3. THE DIFFICULTY OF DEFINING THE GOAL THAT IS SOUGHT

For a definition of the Infinite perfection of human personality we can turn again to the *Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. If the path of realization is hard, much harder is it to define it when it has been attained. Again and again like a refrain, Yājñavalkya reiterates that the realized Infinite of Selfhood is to be described as the 'No, No' of anything experience affords. That Self (Ātman) is to be described by 'No, No.' He is incomprehensible, for he cannot be comprehended. He is imperishable for he cannot perish, he is unattached for he does not attach himself, unfettered he does not suffer, he does not fail'.²

For further definition we turn from Yājñavalkya's 'No, No,' to the great 'Yes' of Kāṭha Upaniṣad. This

¹ *Chāndōgya Upaniṣad* viii. 7-12.

² *Bṛh. Up.* iii, 9,26; iv. 2,4; iv. 4,22.

is certainly the most dramatic, and perhaps the most beautiful of all the Upaniṣads. Death, to whom Naciketas has been surrendered by his father, teaches the boy the meaning of the Immortal Self.

Death says, 'Fools dwelling in darkness, wise in their own conceit, and puffed up with vain knowledge, go round and round, staggering to and fro like blind men led by the blind. The Hereafter never rises before the eyes of the careless child deluded by the delusion of wealth. This is the world he thinks, there is no other; thus he falls again and again under my sway.

'He, the Self, of whom many are not even able to hear, whom many, even when they hear of him do not comprehend; wonderful is a man, when found who is able to teach him (the Self); wonderful is he who comprehends him, when taught by an able teacher.

'That Self when taught by an inferior man is not easy to be known, even though often thought upon; unless it be taught by another there is no way to it, for it is inconceivably smaller than what is small.'¹ Thus does Death teach that the definition of the Goal is hard.

4. THAT WHICH IS SOUGHT CAN ONLY BE DIVINELY IMPARTED

But the Upaniṣad takes us further than this. The knowledge of the Self—difficult to be understood, difficult to attain,—in the end can only be communicated by the Creator.

¹ *Kaṭha Up.* Ad. I. Valli II. 7-8.

‘The Self smaller than the small, greater than the great, is hidden in the heart of that creature. A man who is free from desires, and free from grief, sees the majesty of the Self by the grace of the Creator.’

‘That Self cannot be gained by the Vēda, nor by understanding, nor by much learning. He whom the Self chooses, by him the Self can be gained. The Self chooses his body as His Own.’¹

What faculties have we then to receive the Divine communication? ‘His form is not to be seen, no one beholds him with the eye. He is imagined by the heart, by wisdom, by the mind. Only Faith, the Great Affirmative, transcending all faculty can reach Him.

‘He (the Self) cannot be reached by speech, by mind, or by the eye. How can It be apprehended except by him who says ‘HE IS’. By the words ‘HE IS’ is He to be apprehended, and by admitting the reality of both the invisible Brahman, and the visible world as coming from Brahman. When he has been apprehended by the words ‘HE IS’, then His reality reveals itself.’²

5. GOD REVEALS HIMSELF IN A GROWING EXPERIENCE OF THE SPIRITUAL

No one taught more clearly than the Rṣis that we must pass from the world of sense to the depths of spirit, to realize the Divine. No one recognized more clearly than they the difficulties of the task. No one strove so earnestly to define the Way and the

¹ *Id.* Ad. I. Valli 2 ; 29, 20, 22.

² *Id.* II. 6 ; 12. 13.

Goal, and yet was so conscious of the limitation of the definition. The parable of Indra's search for truth illustrates the R̥sis' method of imparting truth. Definition, none too adequate, is made to appear the fruit of long periods of toil, but the real fruit is the desire to search again and yet again. The real definition is the growing into the experience. And all definitions that the R̥sis gave had this setting of the never ending search, the clinging Faith, the Great Affirmative—'He is'. Faith Clung. Experience brought. They spoke that they did know, and testified that they did see. They found the Infinite of Spirit by transcending the finite; by their assurance of the Infinite; by growing in the Type of the Divine.

They teach then above all else that realization is a growing experience; that perfection is the slow awakening of the soul to the God-Presence, and the God-Life. That is why their language seems to express God-intoxication, a great Pantheism. It is God Himself who is present in the awakening of the Ātman. Realization is revelation. 'The Self smaller than the small, greater than the great, is hidden in the heart of that creature. A man sees the majesty of the Self by the grace of the Creator.'

Realization is revelation. God Himself must enter into the process by which He becomes known. The son cannot grow in the Father's Type without the personal contact with the Father; without the experience of the Father, the conscious absorption of the Father's Spirit and Reality. We see the point of this illustration in the human relationship of father and son.

A human infant denied of a human social heritage cannot realize its humanity. Merely physical growth cannot develop the fine spiritual powers which go to make up this humanity. Stories of wolf children¹ growing up as animals, or else insane, are but exaggerated illustrations of an obvious principle. The myriad spiritual influences which we absorb through companionship of others, through schools, through books, do not constitute our spiritual individuality, yet without them our spiritual individuality could not exist. So is it in the development of our higher faculties. If we cannot find God upon the plane of our finitude, it is because the Spiritual Influence, the personal contact of the Higher, must enter in to unfold our infinite nature.

¹ Kipling's *Jungle Tales* must be familiar to the reader. Another illustration can be given. In 1925, some wolf children were brought before the notice of the Bishop in Assam. Their ages were three and eight. The child of eight was insane, and both tore their food and behaved like animals.

CHAPTER VII

‘CHOICE’ AND REALIZATION

1. THE ORIGINAL MEANING OF THE LAW OF ‘KARMA’

FROM earliest Upaniṣad times, centuries before the philosophical enunciation of the idea that the world and human selves are Māyā (illusion), the Hindu thinker has held the belief that a man's life is determined by his own deed; and his good or ill is the net result of his own choice. And to this day, this belief—the law of Karma—directs the whole religious, social, and ethical outlook of the Hindu. It, rather than the Monism of Śaṅkara (as Western writers suppose), is the philosophy of life and the philosophy of death of the simple man in the street. The earliest meaning of Karma is found in the Upaniṣads we have already so freely quoted. As we have seen, the Rṣis defined man as a finite-infinite. His finitude (far from being Māyā) is his individuality; it is his freedom to choose, to will, to be, what he himself determines. His infinitude too, is but the choice of God.¹ It is attainment of a greater Selfhood through his own act and God's self-giving.

¹ The Rṣis here, as elsewhere, approach very closely to what the Christian too believes.

Karma then primarily meant that man has freedom of choice. ‘He who desires the world of the fathers, by his mere will the fathers come to receive him, and having obtained the world of the fathers, he is happy.’ And he who desires the world of the mothers—or the world of the brothers—or the world of the sisters—or the world of friends—or he who desires perfumes and garlands—food and drink—song and music—or women—.

‘Whatever object he is attached to, whatever object he desires, by his mere will it comes to him, and having obtained it he is happy.’¹

2. THE CHARACTER OF CHOICE DETERMINES THE NATURE OF MAN’S BECOMING

‘These true desires, however, are hidden by what is false; though the desires be true, they have a covering which is false—If we descend into our heart, where Brahman dwells, in the ether of the heart, there are all our true desires, but hidden by what is false.’²

Though a man’s true choice, and his true reality is Brahman, yet the determination of his being depends upon his own desire and will. He can be ‘like this, or like that’—can realize Brahman, his true selfhood, or otherwise—‘according as he acts, and according as he behaves, so will he be. A man of good acts will become good, a man of bad acts, bad. He becomes pure by pure deeds, bad by bad deeds.’

¹ *Chāndōgya Up.* viii. 2. 1-9.

² *Chāndōgya Up.* viii. 3. 1-9.

‘ And here they say that a person consists of desires. And as is his desire, so is his will, and as is his will, so is his deed ; and whatever deed he does, that he will reap.

‘ And here there is this verse,—‘ To whatever object a man’s own mind is attached, to that he goes strenuously ; together with his deed ; and having obtained the end, (the last results) of whatever deed he does here on earth, he returns again from that world (which is the temporary reward of his deed) to this world of action.’

‘ So much for the man who desires. But as to the man who does not desire, who not desiring, freed from desires, is satisfied in his desires, or desires the Self only, his vital spirits do not depart elsewhere—being Brahman—he goes to Brahman.’

On this there is this verse: ‘ When all desires which once entered his heart are undone, then does the mortal become immortal, then he obtains Brahman.’

‘ And as the slough of a snake lies on an ant-hill, dead and cast away, thus lies this body ; but that disembodied immortal spirit is Brahman only, is only light.’ ¹

3. A MAN’S CHOICE HAS ETERNAL RESULTS

No difficulty whatever arises for the ancient Rsis regarding the immortality of the soul. The fruit of a man’s deeds follows him through death.

¹ *Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Up.* iv. 4. 5-7.

‘Those whose conduct has been good, will quickly attain some good birth, the birth of a Brahmin, or a Kṣatriya, or a Vaiśya. But those whose conduct has been evil, will quickly attain an evil birth, the birth of a dog, or a hog, or a chaṇḍāla’.¹

Re-birth, to the Rṣi, is equivalent to hell. The picture of the soul gravitating to earth, to be re-manifested in lower animals, is but a dramatic colouring to the thought that we are only what we choose. If we choose the lower we attain the lower. He that sows to the flesh, will of the flesh reap corruption.

Karma and re-incarnation hold, as we have said, a very large place in the thought of the ordinary Hindu. We might almost say that they have become to him the key of the meaning of life. Through them he interprets suffering, poverty, inequality of caste, merited and unmerited misfortune. According to a man’s deed, both now and in a previous existence—that does he reap. Karma is an inexorable law. It is an impersonal unrelenting chain of cause and effect. Reward and Punishment, Happiness and Misery, are consequences necessarily resulting from given conditions—the deeds, the wills, the desires of men.

It is the tragedy of India that she has never understood or fully valued the truths that her own sons have revealed; that she has always accepted the lesser, and rejected the greater.

¹ *Chāndōgya Up.* v. 7.

Here is a case in point. Where can we find a greater thought than this? God is the Reality and Depth of self. This gift of His own nature that He imparts to us is the gift of individuality. He makes us free to desire, to will, to be; to seek the lower and attain it; or seeking, to attain kinship with Himself. Karma primarily means this, that we become what we will, and in willing we are free: free because our reality is God, because we are His children, because only through choice, through the medium of our own selfhood can we become identified with Him.

Had India emphasized this thought, and not emptied it of its spirituality, how much sorrow, and inhumanity, how much superstition and worthless ritual would have been saved!

4. THE MISINTERPRETATION OF THE THOUGHT OF THE RËSIS IN CONNECTION WITH THE FRUITS OF CHOICE

The popular interpretation of Karma is that because a man reaps only what he sows, therefore is the suffering of the world caused through individual sin. So too are degradation, poverty, servitude, the fruit of former works—if not in the present life, then in a former state of existence. If then a man's Karma is a law that cannot change, suffering, degradation, poverty, servitude, are conditions which neither God nor man have any power or right to change.

The argument is unsound because the premises are Not that men are BOUND, but that men are FREE:—

that we are sons of God and free, for we can choose. Therefore is it wrong to tolerate Karma as fate—and leave men bound. Rather should we strive to lift suffering and degradation from the human heart, that it may learn to exercise its right to freedom and its power of choice. If God is the Reality of the human heart, then is this load of suffering laid upon the heart of man, not less surely laid upon the heart of God.

5. MISINTERPRETATION IN CONNECTION WITH RE-INCARNATION

Another point in which India has missed the spirit of the R̥sis thought and has clung to its letter, is in relation to re-incarnation. In theory—and in its original sense—re-incarnation is imagery typifying what we of the Western world call Purgatory and Hell. It is the notice-board warning the traveller of a dangerous precipice below. It directs his thought to God. It expresses in as living and as poetical a figure of speech as philosophy has ever known, the idea that a man's choice determines his character, his eternal destiny.

Re-incarnation originally was not meant to be a definition of immortality.—Immortality is Spiritual Realization of Brahman. He is the ‘ bank ’ separating the eternal and the temporal worlds. Not to cross that bank is to be cast into outer darkness, where the ‘ worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched ’. This was the meaning of the R̥sis. Figures of speech, in the Eastern, as well as in the Western world, should

not be pushed too far. Now in popular Hinduism, Re-incarnation has become the definition of immortality. A Hindu friend once asked the writer to define the Christian conception of a future life. Having heard the reply, he pointed out the superior merits of the idea of re-incarnation. The substance of his argument was, that to live is not by any means undesirable, and that to obtain a good re-birth is as pleasurable, and as concrete, and as intelligible a method of spending eternity as any ever brought forward. If this truly represents the thought of the man in the street, and not merely one opinion, it is clear that Hinduism has travelled far from the spirit of the R̥sis!

Re-incarnation as a definition of immortality has been advanced by a modern Hindu philosopher and scholar. Writing about the law of Karma, Prof. Sitanath Tattvabhushan says: ' Though not personal, in the popular sense—it may be called personal in a higher sense ;—personal in the sense of its fulfilling a divine purpose. As such, it is a strong proof of the soul's immortality—its continued moral activity in another sphere of life when one is closed to it. Every moral action must have, as the law lays down, a moral effect.—Moral actions again have a certain collective effect. They all tend to the building of a moral character.—Every rational being has such a character at the time of death, and the law of Karma demands that this character must be perpetuated ; must continue to have the effects which exist potentially in the moral forces embodied in it. To suppose a cessation of life

and activity at the destruction of the body, is first of all to suppose a violation of the law of universal causation—the law not only that every cause should have an effect, but that the effect should be adequate to the cause. Human character is an aggregate of moral causes, moral forces, its effects also must therefore be moral, and there can be no moral effects in the true sense without a conscious personal centre of activity ; without the perpetuation, that is, of the lives of moral agents. Secondly, to suppose an extinction of the soul at the death of the body is to pronounce rational and moral life as purposeless, to deny the moral order of the universe, and to conceive it as the play of blind forces. If therefore there is a moral order in the universe, if rational life has a purpose, that purpose cannot be anything higher than moral progress—the attainment of perfection by rational beings—and such a purpose necessarily requires the perpetuation of the conscious life of individuals.’

So far this argument for immortality could be applied with truth by those who do not hold with re-incarnation. The writer however goes on to show, 1. that individuality will require for its manifestation ‘ a fresh organism with essentially the same properties ’—there being no probability of its reproduction and actual continuance except in connection with an organism similar to that which we possess in our present life,’ 2. that re-incarnation seems to be the most probable form of immortality, because ethical life being social, our bodies are required as mediums of communication with others, that in interaction with

them we may grow in righteousness. As regards re-incarnation as lower forms of life, however, the writer admits such a thing 'to be quite improbable in the light of both natural and moral science.'¹

The point I have tried to bring out is that re-incarnation is not a theory of immortality but of—shall I call it—retrogression, of condemnation (using the allegory of hell which runs parallel to it). The R̥sis did not require any argument to prove that the soul is immortal. So too, as they defined it, its immortality was not less than the realization of Brahman.

The pity is that India, in losing sight of this one certain path towards the 'attainment of perfection' should be satisfied with a path which at best is of lower grade of reality than the spiritual, at worst leads directly opposite to the goal it seems to seek.

6. THROUGH CHOICE MAN CAN ATTAIN THE SPIRITUAL

Yes, the R̥sis spoke truth. We do become only what we choose. If we sow to the flesh, from the flesh we surely reap corruption. So far is re-incarnation an eternal spiritual law. But the opposite picture is also true.—Perhaps the R̥sis made the path appear too hard, too abstract, too far removed from human reach.—We can attain if only we will choose. Once again comes an echo from the past. Not only does the flesh drag man down to earth, but in regions of the

¹*The Vēdānta and its Relation to Modern Thought*, Pt. 2. Lecture xi

spirit, within that true Reality which is man’s Source and Goal, must he be born anew.

‘ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’

And again—as by India—the figure of speech is misinterpreted. Nicodemus asked, ‘ How can a man be born when he is old ? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born ? ’

Jesus answered, ‘ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born from above. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice hereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth ; so is everyone that is born of the spirit.’

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, ‘ How can these things be ? ’

And Jesus said, It is not only man who seeks for God, but God too seeks for man. Therefore, if he wills, if he believes, can he be born from above. ‘ For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.’¹

¹ John iii, 16.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BUDDHA'S REALIZATION OF THE SPIRITUAL

1. REACTION FROM THE ULTRAMUNDANE NATURE OF THE RṢIS' IDEAL

REALIZATION of God in the Vēdānta is difficult to define ; more difficult to attain. The path to realization cannot be passed save only by the chosen few. He who is the Reality of all, is veiled from all but the noble thinker of the forest, who, to attain his vision, must withdraw from the ignorant crowd. And even to him—though God is the concreteness of an awakening spirituality—yet is this spirituality elusive, incomprehensible, the No, No, of all finite ideas, an Experience surpassing terms that define experience.

Is it surprising that for mankind as a whole, the Rṣis' light was but as darkness? Is it a matter for wonder that when the mystic phrases, in which the golden grain of his experience (to change the metaphor), was enshrined at length did reach the masses, they did so hidden within the husks of Brahminical ceremonial and ritual ?

Philosophy, however sublime, does not bring the fullest expression of Spiritual Realization. The fullest expression is a Dynamic, a Force, a Personality,

a Life, a Permeation, a Light which lightens others, a Christ and a Buddha moving amongst men.

Buddhism strikes a new and startling note in the philosophy of Spiritual Realization. While the Vēdānta sprang from the forest, from the calm and beauty of the life of the recluse, Buddhism springs from the plains of India. Buddhism, upon the face of it, has marks of being the philosophy of one who bore the burden and heat of—the Indian—day ; of one who toiled along sun-beaten roads, who felt pangs of hunger, who was weary, who battled with human ignorance, whose spirit was branded with pity for human suffering, human poverty ;—such poverty, such suffering as India even to-day knows but too well. Anyone unacquainted with the plains and villages of India might well be tempted to call Buddhism a pessimistic philosophy. Not so when he sees how hard, there, is the lot of man.

2. THE BUDDHA'S VISION OF HUMAN NEEDS AND HIS SEARCH FOR RELEASE

Man in his finitude, was the theme written upon the heart of Buddha.

Man, finite, suffering, sinning, poor, ignorant, diseased, dying, reborn but to work out again and again the eternal inexorable effects of poverty, ignorance, sin, suffering ; —what infinite does he need save PEACE, an infinite rest from becoming ; the chain of cause for ever broken ; the feverish nightmare of life's unending night stilled in a Depth, calm as sleep?

According to old traditions Gotama was a prince of the Śākya race. His father ruled over a country of north India called Kapilavāstu.

Into the prince's sheltered life no shadow of pain or suffering had ever fallen. Then suddenly brought face to face with disease, old age and death, he realized the uncertainty of life; the vanity of human pomp and ambition; the short-sightedness, the self-deludedness of man in pushing from him the thought of that which is his certain end; the lack of sympathy shown to those whom disaster has already stricken down.

Fleeing in dead of night from his palace, and from his wife and infant son, he set out to seek for some solution to the problem of the sorrows of existence.

An old Sanskrit poem ascribed to Asvaghosha, who probably belonged to the first century of our era, recounts how the prince Gôtama having thus left his home, sought the hermitage of the sage Arada, and put before him his problem how to find deliverance from disease, old age and death.

Arada propounded to him that ignorance, the fruit of former actions, and desire cause mundane existence. Further analysed, he traced the root evil to egotism. 'The misery which a man imagines by the ideas, "This is mine", "I am connected with this", is to be recognized as gravitation—by this a man is borne downwards into new births.'—'The child entangled in ignorance is effused in his different births in a world abounding with misery—'¹

¹ 'Sacred Books of the East,' *The Buddha Charita* of Asvaghosha, xii. 32, 37.

Through renunciation of desire, living an ascetic life, indifferent to all feeling, and by mounting to ever higher and higher stages of meditation, finally—‘like the munga reed’s stalk from its sheath, or the bird from its cage—the soul, escaped from the body, is declared to be liberated.’

The poem goes on to recount how the prince ‘having not accepted his words, but having pondered them, filled with the force of his former arguments, thus made answer.

‘I have heard this thy doctrine, subtle and pre-eminently auspicious, but I hold that it cannot be final because it does not teach us how to abandon this soul itself in the various bodies.—

‘Even though the pure soul is declared to be liberated, yet as long as the soul remains there can be no absolute abandonment of it.’

Finding this doctrine of Arada incomplete, in that he counted egotism still present even in a soul freed from body, Götama left the hermitage and sought that of Udraka. Udraka had no more satisfying solution to offer, so the prince next took up his abode in a hermitage at Gayā, intent thereupon seeking enlightenment through self-mortification and fasting.

After six years he decided that his purpose was not achieved this way. He asked himself the question.—

‘Wearied with hunger, thirst, fatigue, with his mind no longer self-possessed through fatigue, how should one who is not absolutely calm reach the end which is to be attained by his mind?

‘ True meditation is produced in him whose mind is self-possessed and at rest. To him whose thoughts are engaged in meditation, the exercise of perfect contemplation begins at once.

‘ By contemplation are obtained those conditions through which is eventually gained that supreme calm, undecaying, immortal state which is so hard to be reached.’¹

Having come to this decision, he partook of food, and with his strength renewed he sat down to seek, through contemplation, the knowledge that would bring salvation to the world.

All the forces of evil—personified, in the poem, as Māra and his children—drew near to assail him ; but the prince remained unshaken in his resolve. ‘ Then some being of invisible shape, but of pre-eminent glory standing in the heavens, beholding Māra thus malevolent against the seer, addressed him in a loud voice, unruffled by enmity.

‘ Take not on thyself O Māra this vain fatigue. Throw aside thy malevolence and retire to peace. This sage cannot be shaken by thee, any more than the mighty mountain Mēru by the wind.’

‘ Even fire might lose its hot nature, water its fluidity, earth its steadiness, but never will he abandon his resolution.—

‘ Such is that purpose of his, that heroic effort, that glorious strength, that compassion for all beings ; until he attains the highest wisdom, he will never rise from

¹ *Ibid.*, xii. 100–103.

his seat, just as the sun does not rise without dispelling darkness.—

‘Pitying the world lying distressed amidst diseases and passions, he the great physician ought not to be hindered who undergoes all his labours for the sake of the remedy, knowledge.

‘He who toilsomely pursues the one good path, when all the world is carried away in devious tracks ; he, the guide, should not be disturbed, like a right informant when the caravan has lost his way.

‘He who is made a lamp of knowledge when all beings are lost in the great darkness—it is not for a right-minded soul to try to quench him—like a lamp kindled in the gloom of night.

‘He who when he beholds the world drowned in the great flood of existence and unable to reach the further shore, strives to bring them safely across, would any right-minded soul offer him wrong ?

‘He whose one desire is to deliver mankind bound in soul by the fast snares of illusion—thy wish to overthrow him is not worthy, wearied as he is for the sake of unloosing the bond of the world.

‘Having listened to his words, and having seen the unshaken firmness of the great saint, Māra departed, dispirited and broken in purpose, with those very arrows by which, O World, thou art smitten in thy heart.

‘When the flower-armed god thus fled away vanquished with his hostile force, and the passionless sage remained victorious, having conquered all the power of darkness, the heavens shone out with the moon like

a maiden with a smile, and a sweet smelling shower of flowers fell down wet with dew.

‘When the wicked one thus fled vanquished, the different regions of the sky grew clearer, the moon shone forth, showers of flowers fell down from the sky upon the earth and the night gleamed out like a spotless maiden.’¹

3. LOVE FOR MAN, THE DIVINE ELEMENT LACKING IN THE RṢIS’ IDEAL, WAS BROUGHT BY THE BUDDHA

The tradition of Gōtama who thus became the Buddha in its main thought rings true. The Saviour of the world, the Great Physician of man’s woe, the Guide, the Light, is he who flies from selfish luxury, and sees life as the poor live it, life as it is to the diseased, the ignorant, to those without vision and hope. It is he who has faith in an Infinite for man—not Infinite in the sense of duration, but Infinite in the sense of quality. It is he who seeks for man a path to freedom:—man, bound to an animal heritage; predestined to disease, failing faculty, death; born of blind desire, reborn through blind desire; doomed through this blind egotistic craving to follow a selfish circle of existence.

And it is the power of the personal Buddha, rather than of the philosophical solution that he found, that to-day—as well as through the ages—has drawn

¹ *The Buddha Charita of Asvaghosha*, Book xiii, 56-59, 61-64, 65-70, 72, 73.
Tevga Sutta, iii. 1, 2.

millions to his feet. The writer once realized the strength of this devotion very forcibly in the temple at Buddha-Gayā—the spot which marks the scene of his Enlightenment—upon witnessing there the rapture and adoration of two pilgrim lamas from Thibet.

Thus while many hesitate to accept, and many others fail to understand, his philosophical argument—the consideration of which we leave over for another chapter—yet must all count that in his love for man has the Buddha truly attained enlightenment, truly achieved the Realization of the Spiritual, truly defined the way towards achievement.—For the Infinite quality of selfhood he brought to man, and the Infinite quality of selfhood he sought to quicken in man was just that he let—‘his mind pervade one-quarter of the world with thoughts of love, and so the second, and so the third, and so the fourth, and thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, and everywhere,’—‘thus did he continue to pervade with heart of Love, far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure. Just as a mighty trumpeter makes himself heard—and that without difficulty in all the four directions; even so of all things that have shape of life, there was not one that he passed by or left aside, but regarded them all ‘with mind set free and deep-felt love.’

CHAPTER IX

THE PHILOSOPHY OF BUDDHA

1. THE BUDDHA'S PHILOSOPHY OF SUFFERING

THE belief in the Four Noble Truths, with that of the Noble Eight-fold Path, is the oldest traditional teaching of the Buddha himself.¹ Buddhist beliefs were not committed to writing until some two to three hundred years after the death of Buddha. During this interval, his teaching and the teaching of his disciples was preserved as oral tradition, and, memorized in short stock phrases, or in longer paragraphs abounding with repetition, was handed down with little change from generation to generation.

The Four Noble Truths are summarized in the very ancient Sutta, translated from the Pali, called *The Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness*: and also in the Sutta, *The Book of the Great Decease*. In the latter the account is as follows:—

‘At that place (Kotigama) the Blessed one addressed the brethren and said: It is through not understanding and grasping Four Noble Truths, O Brethren that we have had to run so long, to wander so long in this weary path of transmigration, both you and I.’

‘And what are these four?’

¹ See Introduction to *The Foundation of the Kingdom*, p. 140
(‘Sacred Books of the East’, vol. xi.)

‘ The noble truth about sorrow ; the noble truth about the cause of sorrow ; the noble truth about the cessation of sorrow ; the noble truth about the path that leads to that cessation. But when these noble truths are grasped and known the craving for existence is rooted out, that which leads to renewed existence is destroyed, and then there is no more birth.’

In the *Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness*, an explanation accompanies the enumeration of the four Noble Truths.

‘ Now this, O Mendicants, is the noble truth concerning suffering.

Birth is attended with pain, decay is painful, disease is painful, death is painful. Union with the unpleasant is painful, painful is the separation from the pleasant, and any craving that is unsatisfied, that too is painful. In brief, the five aggregates which spring from attachment, (the conditions of individuality and their cause) are painful.

This then is the noble truth concerning suffering.

Now this, O Mendicants, is the noble truth concerning the origin of suffering.

Verily it is that thirst (or craving) causing the renewal of existence, accompanied by sensual delight, seeking satisfaction now here now there, that is to say, the craving for the gratification of the passions, or the craving for a future life, or the craving for success (in this present life).

This then, O Mendicants, is the noble truth concerning the origin of suffering.

Now this, O Mendicants, is the noble truth concerning the destruction of suffering.

Verily it is the destruction in which no passion remains of this very thirst; the laying aside of, the being free from, the harbouring no longer of this thirst.

This then, O Mendicants, is the noble truth concerning the destruction of suffering.

Now this, O Mendicants, is the noble truth concerning the way which leads to the destruction of sorrow. Verily it is this noble eightfold path; that is to say:—

Right views;
Right aspiration;
Right speech;
Right conduct;
Right livelihood;
Right effort;
Right mindfulness; and
Right contemplation.

This then, O Mendicants, is the noble truth concerning the destruction of sorrow.' ¹

2. THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELEASE

We see here in this quotation the train of thought that links up the postulate, Existence is sorrowful, with the solution that the Buddha brings in his Noble Eightfold Path.

Life is a weary burden. But there may be some who ask, Need it be a burden? These are they who

¹ *Foundation of the Kingdom*, 5-8.

find pleasure in life. They gratify their senses, heap up riches, look forward to more life—even to rebirth—that they may reap more gain. All such are self-deluded. They passionately struggle to support an individuality, a selfish grasping self that but adds to the evils of existence. Doubly deluded, in that they count the selfish egotistic individuality of permanent value; and also because they count as desirable for the self, sensual delight, likewise of no permanent value.

In this train of thought one can reconstruct the picture of Gōtama the prince, fleeing from the sensuality, and luxury of the palace, horror stricken by his first vision of disease, old age and death; equally horror-stricken at the callousness with which humanity, as a whole, passes by the suffering of others. Existence is sorrowful. If men do not find it so, it is because they falsely gild the reality with sensual pleasure; it is because they put self, and a selfish grasping individuality, in place of apprehension, thought, truth, the realization of things as they truly are.

Thus we find that right understanding, and right contemplation, are the beginning and the end of the path that leads to liberation. Each step along that path is marked by 'upright conduct'.

Over and over again, like a refrain, it is written in *The Book of the Great Decease*.

'Great is the fruit, great the advantage of earnest contemplation when set round with upright conduct. Great is the fruit, great is the advantage of intellect, when set round with earnest contemplation. The mind set round with intelligence is freed from the

great evils—that is to say, from sensuality, from individuality, from delusion, from ignorance.’¹

Existence is sorrowful, but thought issuing in upright conduct brings the destruction of finite bonds. Man’s infinite, man’s freedom is new quality within. He must work out his own salvation, not looking for help from Gods or men, not even from Buddha himself. ‘Be ye lamps to yourselves,’ he tells Ānanda before his death.

‘And whosoever, Ānanda, either now or after I am dead, shall be a lamp unto themselves, and a refuge unto themselves, shall betake themselves to no external refuge, but holding fast to the truth as their lamp, and holding fast as their refuge to the truth, shall look not for refuge to any one besides themselves—it is they Ānanda, among my mendicants who shall reach the very topmost Height—but they must be anxious to learn’.²

The topmost Height, Arahatsip, is a perfect life. To neglect this and follow after vain speculations regarding the immortality of the soul, a future life, Union with Brahma, is but to walk in delusion ‘the jungle of delusion, the wilderness of delusion, the puppet show of delusion, the writhing of delusion, the fetter of delusion. Bound, with this fetter of delusion, the ignorant unconverted man becomes not freed from birth, decay and death, from sorrows, lamentations, pains and griefs, from the practice of rites and

¹ *The Book of the Great Decease*, Ch. 1. 18. Ch. 2, 4. Ch. 2, 11. Ch. 2, 25. Ch. 4, 4. Ch. 4, 12.

² *Ibid.* Ch. 2, 32-35.

ceremonies and the worship of gods he does not become free, I say, from pain.¹

3. THE PATH TO ATTAINMENT NOT WON THROUGH SPECULATION OR LIP-SERVICE.

In no place does the Buddha deny the existence of God. What he denies is that man, sensual, selfish, malicious, uncontrolled, can through any speculation, or belief, through any knowledge of sacred literature or any invocation and prayer, truly know God and attain to union with Him.

In the Sutta *On Knowledge of the Vēdas*, this point is emphasized. Two young Brahmins, followers of different schools of thought, come to Gōtama asking him to decide a dispute between them as to which belief was the true one. In a Socratic dialogue the Buddha draws from them the admission that neither the Brahmins, nor any of the sources from which the Brahmins obtain their belief, have first-hand experience of the facts they uphold.

‘Then you say, Vashettha, that not one of the Brahmins, or of their teachers, or of their pupils, even up to the seventh generation, has ever seen Brahma face to face. And that even the Rṣis of old, the authors and utterers of the verses, of the ancient form of words which the Brahmins of to-day so carefully intone and recite precisely as they have been handed down—even they did not pretend to know or to have

¹ *Asavas-Sutta*, 9-12.

seen where or whence or whither Brahma is. So that the Brahmins versed in the Three Vēdas have forsooth said that "What we know not, what we have not seen, to a state of union with that we can show the way and can say: 'This is the straight path, this is the direct way which leads him, who acts according to it, into a state of union with Brahma.'"

'Now what think you, Vashettha? Does it not follow, this being so, that the talk of the Brahmins, versed though they be in the Three Vēdas, is foolish talk?' And upon Vashettha agreeing he continues, 'Just Vashettha, as when a string of blind men are clinging one to the other, neither can the foremost see, nor can the middle one see, nor can the hindmost see—just even so, methinks, Vashettha, is the talk of the Brahmins versed in the Three Vēdas but blind talk; the first sees not, the middle sees not, nor can the latest see. The talk then of these Brahmins versed in the Three Vēdas turns out to be ridiculous, mere words, a vain and empty thing.'¹

The quotation reminds us of:—'Can the blind guide the blind? Shall they not both fall into a pit.'²

And this 'blindness', this absence of experience is a lack of quality in the self that makes the knowledge of God, and union with Him impossible. The passage emphasizes, not that to know God is impossible, but that to profess knowledge of Him and yet to deny all that knowledge defines by omitting it from life

¹ *On Knowledge of the Vēdas*, Ch. i, 15.

² St. Luke vi. 39.

and practice, is vain and empty teaching, void of value.

‘ Just Vashettha, as if this river Akiravati were full even to the brim, and overflowing. And a man with business on the other side should come up, and want to cross over. And he on this bank, were to be bound tightly, with his arms behind his back, by a strong chain. Now what think you, Vashettha, would that man be able to get over from this bank of the river to the further bank ? ’ . . .

‘ And verily, Vashettha that Brahmins versed in the Three Vēdas, but omitting the practice of those qualities which really make a man a Brahmin, and adopting the practice of those qualities which really make men non-Brahmins—veiled, hindered, obstructed, and entangled by these five hindrances¹—that these Brahmins should after death, on the dissolution of the body become united to Brahmin—such a condition of things has no existence.²

4. THE PATH TO ATTAINMENT IS LOVE

In contrast with the lip-service of the professor of religion, the Buddha himself claims a Knowledge that is concrete Experience.

‘ Suppose there were a man born in Manasakata, and people should ask him, who had never till that time left Manasakata, which was the way to Manasakata. Would that man born and brought up in Manasakata,

¹ The five bonds predisposing to lust, malice, sloth, pride, and doubt.

² Ch. I. 24-32.

be in any doubt or difficulty?—That man, born and brought up at Manasakata might,—fall into doubt and difficulty, but to the Tathāgata, (the Buddha) when asked touching the path which leads to the world of Brahma, there can be neither doubt nor difficulty. For Brahma I know, Vashettha, and the world of Brahma, and the path which leadeth unto it. Yes, I know it even as one who has entered the Brahma world, and has been born in it.’

This knowledge he makes known to erring mortals. ‘The truth doth he proclaim both in its letter and in its spirit, lovely in its origin, lovely in its progress, lovely in its consummation; the higher life doth he make known in all its purity, and in all its perfectness. Those who listen, renounce the world, wealth and relatives, that by self-restraint and discipline they may obey the rules of holy living. When a man thus becomes a recluse — ‘—uprightness is his delight, and he sees danger in the least of those things he should avoid; he adopts and trains himself in the precepts, he encompasses himself with holiness in word and deed, he sustains his life by means that are quite pure; good is his conduct, guarded the door of his senses, mindful and self-possessed, he is altogether happy.’—

‘And he lets his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of Love, and so the second, and so the third, and so the fourth.—

And he lets his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of pity, sympathy, equanimity, and so the second and so the third, and so the fourth.

And thus the whole wide world above, below, around and everywhere does he continue to pervade with heart of pity, sympathy, and equanimity, far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure.

‘Just Vashettha, as a mighty trumpeter makes himself heard—in all the four directions; even so of all things that have shape or life there is not one that he passes by or leaves aside, but regards them all with mind set free and deep-felt pity, sympathy and equanimity.’

‘Verily this, Vashettha, is the way to a state of union with Brahma.’

‘Now what think you Vashettha, will the member of our order who lives thus be in possession of women and of wealth, or will he not?—full of anger or free from anger?—full of malice or free from malice?—will his mind be sinful or pure? will he have self-mastery or will he not?’

And upon receiving the answer that he will be free from household cares, free from anger, from malice, pure in mind, master of himself,—

‘Is there then agreement and likeness between the Bhikkhu and Brahma?’

There is, Gotama.

Then in sooth,—that such a one should after death, when the body is dissolved become united with Brahma, who is the same,—such a condition of things is every way possible.’¹

¹ Ch. i, 42, 43, 46, 47, also Ch. iii. 1, 3, 4, 5-8. I have omitted Ch. ii, which (according to Porf. Rhys Davids) is a later insertion in the text.

5. NIRVĀṆA AND ATTAINMENT

By thus showing that only quality of self, and a perfect life,—the truth he himself brought to men in his Noble Eight-fold Path—was the way to attain the Infinite (Brahma)—Buddha does not mean to contradict his former thesis that the ultimate goal of attainment is the cessation of desire for life, Nirvāṇa, Peace. He would seem to say—Man, finite, bound to his animal nature and animal heritage, cannot break away from his limitations by formulating an Infinite (Brahma or God) or by Its invocation, or personification, or by any ritual associated with It ; he can surmount his limitations by bringing his life into harmony with the conceptions he has formed of Infinitude, by growing like Brahma, by attainment in depth of character.

Then—if you will—having already attained, union with an Infinite when the body is dissolved is no contradictory statement.

In other places the Buddha seems to teach that the higher life that unloosens the bonds of the finite culminates in a higher than life. Life is made up of component parts and involves decay. Salvation is deeper than Life.

‘There are spirits, Ānanda, in the sky, but of worldly mind, who dishevel their hair and weep, who stretch forth their arms and weep, who fall prostrate on the ground, and roll to and fro in anguish at the thought : “ Too soon will the Blessed One die. Too soon will the Happy One pass away. Full soon will the Light of the world vanish away.” ’

‘ But the spirits who are free from passion bear it, calm and self-possessed, mindful of the saying which begins, “ Impermanent indeed are all component things.” How then is it possible whereas anything whatever, when born, brought into being, and organized, contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution—how then is it possible that such a being should not be dissolved? No such condition can exist.’

Or note the dying words of Buddha :—

‘ Then the Blessed One addressed the brethren, and said ; Behold now brethren, I exhort you saying, “ Decay is inherent in all component things. Work out your salvation with diligence.”

This was the last word of the Tathāgata.’

Once the disciple Ānanda approached his master in order to enquire about the destiny of some members of the order who had died. In reply the Buddha teaches that those who in this world have ‘ known and realized and attained to Arhatship (the perfect life)—become an inheritor of the highest heavens, there to pass entirely away, thence never to return.’ And in order that each disciple may predict his own future condition without bringing every individual case to the master the Buddha formulates a ‘ Mirror of Truth’. It includes faith in the Buddha, faith in the truth, faith in the order, and to be possessed of virtues which make men truly free, virtues ‘ untarnished by the desire of future life’. We find the same thought in the Sutta ‘ Barrenness and Bondage ’ where the Buddha condemns as motive for embracing

the religious life 'the aspiration of belonging to some one or other of the angel hosts'. The higher life that Buddha sought for men was a higher than life for self, even though self be conceived as angel, or spirit, or heavenly form.

6. WHAT DID BUDDHA'S NIRVĀṆA MEAN?

No one has been more misunderstood by thinkers of the West than has Buddha.

It is generally believed that he denied the existence of self, of God, and of a future life.

What he actually taught was, that selfhood is greater than egotism. The great vision, the great purpose, the great heart, he called by a name the direct opposite to egotism—'extinction', Nirvāṇa, Arhatship,—connoting extinction of selfish desire and lust. In this new quality within, is man's freedom. This perfect life, a life of love and sympathy for all things, is the only means by which the knowledge of God is possible. Moreover Nirvāṇa—attainment—is more than future life in the sense in which so many conceive it:—as hope for postponed rewards; the shadow cast by egotism beyond its limited sphere of suffering or of joy, here in time. Into Nirvāṇa time does not enter. It can be a condition here and now. To aspire to it, by a definite rule of life, is to aspire to a state more defined, more real than any heaven. The Buddha is not silent upon the matter of Arhatship—as attained here and now. He seems to say, is it not enough to attain? Attainment is our goal. Once we begin to seek a future

life—anything other than attainment—then egotism creeps in. We crave to have, not to be.

Lest his silence as to the future should be misjudged, let us remember that the enlightenment he so long sought, the enlightenment which when found he called Nirvāṇa, is described as ‘a supreme calm undecaying immortal state, hard to be reached.’ Could ‘extinction’ in its ordinary meaning be so defined?

Rather would Nirvāṇa appear to be a name for the great Silence, the great Peace, that underlies existence:—the Silence we can feel when selfish craving dies. It is a Depth and a Calm more real than life and time; a quality of being untouched by change and by decay.

The superficial noisy West knows not this Silence. From its selfish individualistic point of view the supreme selflessness of Buddha may appear extinction. Yet even the West clings nominally to a religion which teaches self-extinction, that a greater than self should rule: ‘He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall save it’; a religion which teaches too, that quality of self counts more than empty invocation of God: ‘Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth—’; a religion which can promise beyond the tribulation of this world an Arhatship, or attainment, that is ‘Peace’: ‘Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you not as the world giveth, give I unto you—In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.’

7. THE TEACHING OF BUDDHA IN RELATION TO THE R̥SIS' SPECULATIONS

Buddhism supplied that which was lacking in the thought of the R̥sis. It emphasized what they almost concealed by their pantheistic language, that salvation is for individual effort alone. It is true that many of the older R̥sis did teach (as we have shown) that on man's own choice depended his salvation ; that only in his own experience of the Infinite, had he share or reality in the Infinite. But the Buddha deliberately turned from speculation, in this or any other of the prevalent schools of thought, and defined salvation in terms of an active moral becoming, a concrete, most surely found in purity of life, and in unbounded love and sympathy for men. On the one side, religion was identified with the polytheism and the sacrificial system of Brahmanism. On the other with the philosophy and theorising of the forest recluse. To Buddha, it seemed that both left out poor, 'diseased, suffering and dying humanity. The God humanity needed was neither the gods of the priesthood, nor the God of philosophy. Not ritual, not speculation, but teaching. Not sacrifice, not abstractions, but a way to live.

CHAPTER X

THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

1. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF A PERSONAL GOD

THE spirit of speculation could not die in India. But the power of the Buddha was great. Thinkers began to see that his personality was a greater force among men, drawing them to seek salvation, than had ever been the abstract Brahman of the hermitage.

Thus there evolved a Greater-than-Brahman, a God possessing personality, a God who comes to live with men that he may bring salvation, a God found through faithful performance of the common duties of life, a God needing, seeking, and living within the love and devotion of men. This God was Vāsudēva, revealed in the *Bhagavad Gītā* as Kṛṣṇa, and his worshippers were the Bhāgavatas.

Sir R. G. Bhandarkar in *Vaisnavism, Saivism, and Minor Religious Systems*¹ shows that there are references to Vāsudēva in inscriptions and writings as early as the 4th century B. C. He also places the *Bhagavad Gītā* at this early date². Christian writers have often traced in it Christian influences, but it seems much more probable from its resemblance to the theistic elements

¹ p. 3.

² p. 13.

in the *Upaniṣads*, as well as from the attitude of compromise it takes in regard to the older point of view, and from the powerful effect Buddhism actually had in India (an effect which Christianity never had in philosophical circles) that the early date is correct.

2. KṚṢṆA IN THE *Bhagavad Gītā*, AND THE DOCTRINE OF SPIRITUAL DISCRIMINATION

The *Bhagavad Gītā* comes as an episode in the *Mahābhārata*, and recounts how during a war between the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas, both branches of one tribe, Arjuna, one of the Pāṇḍavas, pauses on the field of battle, horror-stricken at the thought of killing his near relatives. Kṛṣṇa, who had become his friend, and who was acting the part of his charioteer, persuades him to do his duty as a soldier. This theme of duty opens up an exposition of the meaning of the Bhāgavata doctrine.

The point Kṛṣṇa emphasizes is that the spiritual is the Real, and the wise man judges and acts with right understanding of the spiritual, not swayed by appearances and by sense. He whose mind is fixed on the spiritual does not refrain through fear from doing his duty nor again does he do it from motive of reward. The duty which lies to hand faithfully fulfilled without fear, or hope of benefit, is the truest path to spiritual attainment. Action thus performed is as a sacrifice to God. 'He who having subdued all his passions performeth with his active faculties all the duties of life unconcerned as to their result, is to be esteemed. Do thou perform the proper actions, action is superior

to inaction. The journey of thy mortal frame cannot be accomplished by inaction. All actions performed other than as sacrifice unto God make the actor bound by action. Abandon then, O Son of Kunti, all selfish motives, and in action perform thy duty for him alone. —Perform thou that which thou hast to do, at all times unmindful of the event, for the man who doeth that which he hath to do, without attachment to the result, obtaineth the Supreme.¹ ‘Those who have spiritual discrimination call him wise whose undertakings are all free from desire, for his actions are consumed in the fire of knowledge. He abandoneth the desire to see a reward for his actions—he is not solicitous of results—he is contented with whatever he receives fortuitously—is free from evil and from envy, the same in success and failure, even though he act, he is not bound by the bond of action. All the actions of such a man who is free from self-interest, who is devoted, with heart set upon spiritual knowledge, and whose acts are sacrifices for the sake of the Supreme, are dissolved and left without effect on him. Some devotees give sacrifice to the gods, while others, lighting the subtler fire of the Supreme Spirit, offer up themselves. ‘The goal of all action disinterestedly performed, the goal of this sacrifice of self, is comprehended in spiritual knowledge. Seek this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility; the wise who see the truth will communicate it to thee, and knowing which, thou shalt never

¹ *Bhagavad Gītā*, Ch. 3.

again fall into error, O Son of Bhārata.—Even if thou wert the greatest of all sinners thou shalt be able to cross over all sins in the bark of spiritual knowledge. There is no purifier in this world to be compared to spiritual knowledge; and he who is perfected in devotion findeth spiritual knowledge springing up spontaneously in himself in the progress of time'.¹

3. THE IDEA OF AN ACTIVE GOD

Not only does God require action from men, not only does He give Himself as the Supreme Gift in return for action done with loftiest motives, but He Himself is the Type and Example of action. As Christ said, 'My father worketh hitherto and I work', so Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna, 'Even if the good of mankind only is considered by thee, the performance of thy duty will be plain; for whatever is practised by the most excellent men, that is also practised by others. The world follows whatever example they set. There is nothing, O son of Pṛthā, in the three regions of the universe which is necessary for me to perform, nor anything possible to obtain which I have not obtained: and yet I am constantly in action. If I were not indefatigable in action, all men would presently follow my example, O son of Pṛthā. If I did not perform actions these creatures would perish; I should be the cause of confusion of castes and should have slain all these creatures.'²

¹ *Bhagavad Gītā*, Ch. 4

² *Ibid.*, Ch. 4.

4. THE TWO-FOLD PATH TO ATTAINMENT

We can trace in this emphasis of action, and the contrasting place it holds with speculation, the influence of Buddha upon Hindu thought. Through right performance of duty, through noble conduct, through effort, through offering up all selfish desires and motives in a sacrificial fire of self, can a man attain Nirvāṇa. But when all this is admitted, the orthodox view is again brought forward. The question arises, if action and inaction both lead to the same goal—spiritual knowledge—how is one better than the other? The answer Kṛṣṇa gives is that ‘Renunciation of action, and devotion through action are both means of final emancipation, but of these two, devotion through action is better than renunciation.’ Yet only children see any difference between the two. ‘He who perfectly practises the one, receives the fruit of both, and the place which is gained by the renouncer of action, is also attained by him who is devoted in action.’ It is the end that justifies the means, whether this is speculation or action.

But both speculation and action must be untainted by any motive, or desire less than the attainment of the Supreme Spirit. ‘He whose heart is not attached to objects of sense finds pleasure within himself, and through devotion, united with the Supreme, enjoys imperishable bliss.’¹

¹ *Bhagavad Gītā*, Ch. 5.

5. THE NATURE OF GOD. IMMANENT AND TRANSCENDENT

More important than the way in which God is to be found is the thought which the *Bhagavad Gītā* unfolds of the nature of God. The Brahman of the *Upaniṣads*, in truth, has stooped to become a Divine Grace illuminating the heart of man. 'Whenever there is a decline of virtue, and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world, then does He become incarnate.'¹

Incarnate too in Nature in His Inferior Form, Sustainer of Nature in His Superior Form,—only one among many thousands, know Him as He is. Yet those who do know, Him, those possessed of spiritual knowledge are 'dear' to Him. Even such faith as the worldly-wise possess, and the blind groping within ritual and idolatry, He does not pass by but accepts, and inspires with greater constancy. Much more does He accept and enjoy the offerings of the humble soul who in his worship, with a pure heart offereth a leaf, a flower, or fruit, or water unto Him. He asks that in every detail of life men shall commit their doings to Him. 'Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest, whatever mortification thou performest, commit each to me.' Like the Christian's God who 'sendeth rain upon the evil and the good', He is 'the same to all creatures.' If the evil man turn to Him He accepts him as He accepts the righteous, and gives him the power and

¹ *Bhagavad Gītā*, Ch. 4.

the joy of becoming righteous. Women too, and outcastes, if they seek His 'sanctuary' shall, equally with kings and priests, 'tread the highest path'. 'I know not hatred nor favour; but those who serve with love dwell in me and I in them.'¹

Thus indwelling, does He illuminate the human heart.

'I am the origin of all; all things proceed from me; believing me to be thus the wise gifted with spiritual wisdom worship me; their very hearts and minds are in me; enlightening one another, and constantly speaking of me, they are full of enjoyment and satisfaction. To them thus always devoted to me, who worship me with love, I give that mental devotion by which they come to me. For them do I out of my compassion, standing within their hearts, destroy the darkness which springs from ignorance, by the brilliant lamp of spiritual discernment.'²

Who then is He?

This is the royal knowledge, the royal mystery. He is Cause of all, Sustainer of all, but yet Other. The reality of things comes from Him, and He is still A REALITY apart. All things exist in Him, and yet are not in Him. For, though He pervade the universe, He is to the universe as One present within worship. He is as 'Father and mother, grandsire, and preserver':—as the Holy One, the object of knowledge, the mystic purifying syllable

¹ *Bhagavad Gītā*, Ch. 9.

² *Bhagavad Gītā*, Ch. 10.

OM, as a sacred literature.' He is 'the goal, the comforter, the lord, the witness, the resting-place, the asylum and the friend; the origin and the dissolution, the receptacle, the storehouse, and the eternal seed.'

The great and the good, the strong and the beautiful, the holy and the wise, spring from a portion of His energy.

But indeed to know Him exceeds the powers of human faculties. Immanent and transcendent, how can we comprehend the knowledge and the mystery? 'What O Arjuna, hast thou to do with so much knowledge as this? I established this whole universe with a single portion of myself, and remain separate.'¹

6. PARALLELS WITH THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF GOD AND OF DUTY

That the description which the *Bhagavad Gītā* gives of God through the mouth of Vāsudēva-Kṛṣṇa is both lofty and beautiful, I think no one can deny. That the way to spiritual attainment there defined, demands of men the noblest and purest elements in character, must also be conceded.

Yet, through the ages, who, other than the scholar, knows of Vāsudēva? Who is there in India who seeks to find him in spiritual discernment? Who is there who offers to him the sacrifice of self, in duty selflessly performed? Who is there who brings to the teeming millions, to the outcaste, to the suffering,

¹ *Bhagavad Gītā*, Ch. 9.

to women, to children, the 'royal knowledge', the 'royal mystery' that he is the resting place and the goal—even for them;—that he is the comforter, the friend, the father?

Surely there is some justification for the attitude of those Christians who claim to find in the God of *Bhagavad Gītā* a reflection from the God revealed by Jesus Christ. They see Him in the setting of popular Hinduism, or of abstract philosophy, and find it inconceivable that He sprang from there. 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?'

Yet the Divine did spring from Nazareth, though few there were who realized Him. We should be slow in denying to India her greatest spiritual triumph, even though we might regret that she has failed to give her children the heritage which is their due.

CHAPTER XI

VAIṢṆAVISM

1. THE INFLUENCE OF THE *Bhagavad Gītā* UPON SUBSEQUENT THOUGHT

IT is a difficult, if well-nigh impossible, task to summarize in one short chapter a movement of thought that has a history ranging from the fourth century B.C. to the sixteenth or seventeenth century A. D. The utmost that can be attempted is to emphasize the main directions that Vaiṣṇavism has taken, and to indicate how, through a very varying career, the Sāṅkya (or speculative) and Yōga (or devotional) philosophies that are the subject of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, become the Jñāna Mārga and the Bhakti Mārga of more modern times.

This movement of thought is like a mighty river which gathers to itself various other streams of thought, and which, flowing down the ages, through the opposition of many forces, ever branches off in new directions. Yet this mighty river, in spite of the separation that has taken place between the main flow and its tributaries and streams, possesses the characteristic that makes it one. The devotion which found expression in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, was, as it were, the great torrent that gathered in the mountain slopes, and gave a spiritual impetus to the thought that rushed

onward through the centuries. And so whatever changing appellation God received, He was still conceived as personal, and He still called forth the love and worship of His followers.

It is true the spiritual gave place to the fanciful. Devotion,—which requires the whole personality—unguided by reason and morality became at times unregulated feeling and often debased. But, though there is much to condemn in the vast system known as Vaiṣṇavism, (which with Śaivism, represents almost the entire worship of the Hindus) yet it must be remembered that at its source there is the thought that God—however conceived—is approachable by men, that He can manifest Himself to men, and that He claims devotion and service from His believers. In spite of the legends, superstitions, childish fancies, and allegories through which Vāsudēva was represented to the popular mind, time and again a real love burst up in the heart of the Bhakta; and the story which tried to express the Divine became indeed a vivid imagery, while the believer found the Real in deep spiritual union.

2. THE GROWTH OF THE DEVOTIONAL ELEMENT IN RELIGION

The religion of Vāsudēva which originated as a reform movement to emphasize the personal character of God and scope for His service in the every-day duties of life, soon assumed (according to Dr. Bhandarkar) 'a sectarian form and was called the Pāñcarātra or Bhāgavata religion. It was professed

by the tribe of Kṣatriyas of the name of Sātvata, and was noticed by Megasthenes about the end of the fourth century before Christ as the religion of such a specific people. This faith mingled itself with the existing one in Nārāyaṇa, the fountain from which all men have sprung, and with that in Viṣṇu, whose traces were visible in this world, and who at the same time had a mysterious nature.'

With Viṣṇu, the idea of manifestation was carried to the extreme of fancy. He became incarnate as 'boar, man-lion, dwarf, Rāma of the Bhrgu race, Rāma Dāśarathī, and in the form (Vāsudēva-Kṛṣṇa) assumed for the destruction of Kāṁsa.' Other references give as further incarnations, swan, tortoise, fish. According to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* his incarnations amount to twenty-three, sages and teachers adding to the number.

But yet another stream of thought became blended with the wide-spreading river. To continue quoting from Dr. Bhandarkar: 'Soon after the beginning of the Christian era another element was contributed to this system of religion by the Ābhīras, or cowherds, who belonged to a foreign tribe, in the shape of the marvellous deeds of the boy-Kṛṣṇa, who came to be regarded as a god, and of his amorous dalliances with cowherdesses.' Dr. Bhandarkar gives the following reasons for distinguishing between the earlier Vāsudēva-Kṛṣṇa, and Gōpāla-Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd-god—whose cult at best produced a less lofty conception of love than that of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and at worst a positive debasement. He shows that in the

earlier references to Vāsudēva, there is no mention of the cowherd Kṛṣṇa. He shows again that identification of Gōpāla Kṛṣṇa, believed to have become incarnate to destroy the demons of the cow-settlement, with the incarnation of Vāsudēva-Kṛṣṇa to effect the destruction of Kamsa, only took place at the later date of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. The third reason he gives¹ is that the name Gōvinda, given to Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd god, does not occur in the *Bhagavad Gītā*; and he considers that a chance reference to the cowherd Kṛṣṇa in the *Mahābhārata*, is an interpolation.

3. ŚAṆKARA'S DOCTRINE OF 'ILLUSION'

About the end of the eighth century A. D. there came a necessary check to the riot of religious fancies in which man's need for God had found expression. At this time Śaṅkara, a Brahman Śaiva of South India, endeavoured to restore to Indian thought the intellectual and spiritual depth that it had once possessed, and now had almost lost. As said before,² Western thinkers are too prone to identify Indian Philosophy with the teaching of Śaṅkara—yet seen in his relationship to Vaiṣṇavism, he is only one of the many reformers who tried to purify belief with the cry, Back to the Upaniṣads. It is true, he gave to the Rṣis' thought, through his interpretation of an ancient commentary on the Upaniṣads that had been written at some unknown date by Bādarāyaṇa—himself otherwise

¹ See Dr. Bhandakar's, *Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism etc.*, Parts i, ix, also xi and xxvi.

² See Chapter II above.

unknown—a new and startling meaning. But his views, though indeed restoring to religion the spiritual and philosophical element that had been lost through the centuries, met with emphatic opposition.

Stated briefly, Śaṅkara's teaching was, that knowledge can be of two kinds, *Vyāvahārika*—or relative to our imperfect faculties and *pāramārthika*—or true. Our belief in phenomenal existence is of the first order. It is analogous to the knowledge possessed by a 'dreaming man who in his dreams sees manifold things, and, up to the moment of waking is convinced that his ideas are produced by real perception, without suspecting the perception to be a merely apparent one.' True knowledge comes when the mind awakens to the Reality that Brahman is the essence of all.

But not only are we deluded regarding the phenomenal world. The same blindness applies to our knowledge of the self. 'The following passage, "That is the self, thou art that, O Śvētakētu"' teaches—Śaṅkara says in his commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtras*¹—'that the embodied soul also is Brahman. The fact then of the embodied soul being Brahman in essence, if once accepted as scriptural, does away with the independent existence of the individual soul, just as the idea of a rope being a snake is removed by the knowledge of the rope. Scriptural passages also, such as, "When the Self only is all this how should he see another?" declare that for him who sees everything is Brahman in essence, the whole

¹ ii, 1-14.

phenomenal world with its actions, agents, and results of actions, is non-existent.'

Of what nature then is Brahman? How comes it that the world takes the appearance of reality?

'Brahman is pure 'Being', or, which comes to the same, pure intelligence or thought (caitanya, jñāna). Intelligence or thought is not to be predicated of Brahman as its attribute, but constitutes its substance; Brahman is not a thinking being but thought itself. It is absolutely destitute of qualities, whatever qualities or attributes are conceivable, can only be denied of it. —But, if nothing exists but one absolutely simple being, whence the appearance of the world by which we see ourselves surrounded and in which we ourselves exist as individual beings? Brahman, the answer runs, is associated with a certain power called Māyā or Āvidyā, to which the appearance of this entire world is due. This power cannot be called being (sat) for being is only Brahman; nor can it be called 'non-being' (asat) in the strict sense, for it at any rate produces the appearance of this world. It is in fact a principle of illusion; the undefinable cause owing to which there seems to exist a material world comprehending distinct individual existences. Being associated with this principle of illusion, Brahman is enabled to project the appearance of the world, in the same way as a magician is enabled by his incomprehensible magical power to produce illusory appearances of animate and inanimate beings.—Māyā under the guidance of the Lord modifies itself by a progressive evolution into all the individual existences

distinguished by special names and forms, of which the world consists; from it there springs in due succession the different material elements and the whole bodily apparatus belonging to sentient beings. In all those apparently individual forms of existence the one indivisible Brahman is present, but owing to the particular adjuncts into which Māyā has specialized itself it appears to be broken up—it is broken up, as it were, into a multiplicity of intellectual or sentient principles, the so called Jīvas (individual or personal souls). What is real in each Jīva is only the universal Brahman itself; the whole aggregate of individualizing bodily organs and mental functions which in our ordinary experience separate and distinguish one Jīva from another, is the offspring of Māyā and as such unreal.' ¹

With enlightenment as to the fictitious nature of the self and the reality of Brahman, the soul gains release. The means by which enlightenment is obtained is meditation. The 'vidvān' (or the enlightened) having attained knowledge of Brahman is no longer bound by his good or evil deeds, but gains mukti (salvation) and at death becomes merged in Brahman.

4. OPPOSITION TO ŚAṆKARA'S DOCTRINE FROM THE VAIṢNAVAS

Śaṅkara's philosophy found most vigorous opposition from the Vaiṣṇavas. As Prof. Bradley's philosophy at the present day, so Śaṅkara's if followed to its

¹ 'The Sacred Books of the East', vol. xxxiv. Introduction, pp. 24-26.

logical conclusion banishes Personality from God, and destroys all possibility of Bhakti or love in His worshippers. Opposition smouldered for many years, and at last found philosophical expression in the eleventh century by Rāmānuja. In his youth Rāmānuja had studied under a teacher of Śaṅkara's school of thought; but he himself turned from unqualified monism of a God that is 'Pure Thought,' to the more Personal God of religion. At the same time he gave to religion a philosophical foundation. He, too, took as the basis of his philosophy the sacred texts of the Upaniṣads, and built upon them belief in One All-embracing Being, 'All-powerful, All-knowing, All-merciful; whose nature is fundamentally antagonistic to all evil.'¹ But in contrast with Śaṅkara's interpretation of Oneness—by which the world and the individual are understood to be the illusion or negative which point beyond to the Real or Positive—the interpretation given by Rāmānuja is that Brahman 'comprises within itself distinct elements of plurality which all of them lay claim to absolute reality of one and the same kind.' He postulates all three, the insensate world, the individual soul, and God, as three eternal principles. He makes the two former attributes of the Supreme Soul, in the relation to Him, as it were, of body. He is immanent in them but yet Other. He too is the Creator. Under His guidance the subtle form of the insensate world develops until the 'mundane egg' is produced. So too does He

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

guide the development of the individual self through its successive stages. According to Rāmānuja, God or Viṣṇu can be manifested in five ways. He can dwell with a body not made of matter, within an image set up as object of adoration. He can manifest Himself as an Avatāra, i.e., as incarnate. In His third manifestation He assumes four forms, which symbolize His qualities in Creation, etc. These forms are Vāsudēva, Saṁkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. His fourth manifestation represents His Transcendence:—(It is described by Dr. Bhandarkar).—Para or the highest, in which mode Nārāyaṇa, called also Parabrahman and Para-Vāsudēva, lives in a city called Vaikuṇṭha which is guarded by certain persons and which has doorkeepers; seated in a pavilion of gems on a couch in the form of the serpent Śeṣa placed on a throne having the eight legs, Dharma and others; attended by Śrī, Bhu, and Nīlā; holding the celestial weapons, conch-shell, discus, and others; adorned with celestial ornaments, such as a tiara and others; possessed of numberless auspicious attributes, knowledge, power, and others; and His presence being enjoyed by the eternal spirits, such as Ananta, Garuḍa, Viṣvaksēna, and others, and by delivered souls.¹ The fifth manifestation is as the Inner Ruler of all things, and as revealed to the devout.²

Rāmānuja teaches that souls are of three kinds: (1) those tied to the circle of existence—a category

¹ *Vaiṣṇavism, Saivism, etc.*, p. 53.

² I have followed Prof. S. Tathvabhushan's order in his *Vēdānta in Relation to Modern Thought*, p. 2.

that may include gods or men, or even the humblest form of vegetable and animal life, (2) those that are finally delivered, (3) those that are eternal. Men can set before themselves one or other of these three goals. The Bhakta sees the third. The method by which he seeks to attain is through Karmayōga—or the performance of duty, religious rites and ceremonies, austerities, and charities, without regard for the fruit resulting from them. Karmayōga purifies the soul and leads on to Jñānayōga, which is the development of knowledge. This is not ordinary knowledge, but illumination—by which one comes to know that God is the Great Reality of the universe and that soul and matter are His attributes. But knowledge too is only one stage on the path to attainment. It leads on to Bhaktiyōga. There are certain rules to be followed for the practice of Bhakti:—rules regarding the purification of body and mind; the cultivation of virtue, compassion and truth; the habit of hopefulness; and the absence of elatedness. Through these means, and by constant meditation, there develops a selfless love and devotion for, and the actual realization of, God. Those who are unable to practise Bhakti,—the poor, the helpless, the oppressed,—if they too desire to renounce the world and to attain eternal bliss, can follow the path of Prapatti—which consists in the faith that God will save, and in throwing one's whole soul on Him. Among the followers of Rāmānuja two sects have been formed, one of which holds that the person takes an active part in Prapatti, the other a passive. In the one case the souls must seek

salvation, in the other the act of saving begins with God Himself. The former school, known as Vāḍakalai, illustrates its doctrine by the female monkey and her cub. The cub clings to the mother while she conveys it to safety. The second school, called the Tenkalai, gives the illustration of the cat and her kittens. The cat catches hold of her kitten and without effort on its part carries it to safety.¹

5. FURTHER OPPOSITION

From the time of Rāmānuja onwards, many thinkers came forward to refute the Māyā theory and develop more fully the way of Love. In addition to the Sri sect which Rāmānuja himself founded, there were other sects, associated with the names of Maḍhva, Vallabha, Nimbarka, Rāmānanda, etc.

It would be impossible within the scope of this book to recount in detail the ideas which each thinker advanced. Only one more aspect of the Bhakti Mārga can be mentioned—the emotional—which perhaps has not been sufficiently emphasized in this outline of Vaiṣṇavism.

It was said above that some four or five centuries after the rise of Vaiṣṇavism, the second Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd god, became identified with the movement of thought that had originated with the Kṛṣṇa of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. The second Kṛṣṇa made an appeal to the popular mind by the story of miracle, adventure,

¹ In the above interpretation of Bhakti Mārga, I have followed Dr. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism, Saivism, etc.*, pp. 54-56..

and love, so dear always to humanity. But, as in the case of some Old Testament stories that are not in harmony with the spirituality of the Bible as a whole there are found apologists who read into the stories some hidden interpretation ; so have the devout in India read into the escapades and loves of Kṛṣṇa a mystic meaning. It is this meaning that makes Kṛṣṇa a power in India to this day. It is because he seems to speak to men the astounding message that God is Love, and to set aflame the human heart by a touch that seems Divine, that he is worshipped with all the depth of adoration of which mankind is capable.

5. THE WORSHIP OF GOD AS LOVE

India long since has learnt—with wonder, adoration and bliss—that God is Love. Though the intellect has slurred over His Personality and imagination has framed of Him crude or sensual pictures, yet the heart of India echoes and re-echoes truth in her reiterated cry that God is Love. Śaivas, as well as Vaiṣṇavas, though in other respects their belief has little that can appeal to Western thought, have with this strange inward illumination attained to the consciousness of the Love of God.

‘ The ignorant say that love and God are two.

The wise man knows that love itself is God.

Whoever knows that love itself is God shall rest
in love, one with God.’

Thus has sung a Śaiva poet of South India.

Such was the belief of Chaitanya, a Vaiṣṇava of Bengal.

Chaitanya lived about the beginning of the 16th century. He emphasised the emotional in Bhakti Mārga, and preached faith, love, and singing the name of the Divine as the most effectual means of salvation. His doctrine was that Kṛṣṇa is the Object of Love ; and so beautiful is he that he excites love even in himself, for himself. His power pervades and creates the universe. His chief power is that which creates joy in the heart—which is love. There are five relationships in which the worshipper can stand to him. These are Śānti, Dāśya, Sakhya, Bātsalya and Madhura : or Peacefulness, Servantship, Friendship, Parenthood and Sweetness. ‘ The first step ’—writes M. M. Dhar in his interpretation of *Chaitanya Chari-tāmṛita*¹, the Bengali Life of Chaitanya—‘ in the religion of love is Śānti or “ peace ”. In this stage the devotee subdues worldly desires and has firm faith in an omnipresent God, but has not yet developed the feeling of affection towards Him. In Dāśya or servantship, the devotee looks upon God as his master, and himself as loving servant. In the Sakhya or friendship, the devotee has acquired greater affection for God, and looks upon Him as a friend. In Bātsalya the devotee is either father or mother, and God is the child with all the affection and loving service that that relationship implies. In the “ sweet ” or Madhura relation, the devotee is wife or mistress, and God the beloved husband or lover. If the devotee tries earnestly to practise in his heart the

¹Mohini M. Dhar, *Gaurāṅga and His Gospel*, p. 26.

line indicated, realization ultimately dawns upon him through the grace of God, and he then enjoys the ocean of celestial bliss.'—'Human love in all its varied forms has been made to typify this inexpressible Divine Love. Man can think of divine things only in his own human way. There is no other alternative possible. This is the line pursued by Chaitanya in his teachings and practice. He taught religion by practising it himself. Following his teachings, Bhaktas make use of all the common terms associated with the common love of humanity, in relation to God and His worship through love.' 'Where human experience attains its greatest rapture, Kṛṣṇa, beloved of Rādhā—symbolising the highest pitch of love of the human soul—and of the cowherdesses—symbolising the simple love of the devotee—brings a divine parallel.'

6. THE NEED OF A DIVINE STANDARD IN LOVE

The history we have described, is of love seeking to define the object of its devotion. In reaction from the 'No, No' of the Rṣis—from the incomprehensibility of God—the heart seeks to bring Him within the region of the known. But as we see the heart of India sway from crude to sensual imagery, checked from time to time by intellectual revivals, the thought becomes clear to us that human love however earnest, no more than philosophical speculation, is of itself capable of a complete definition of God. Here too, in following love, the way is hard, the goal is hidden. The merely human, whatever its depth of passion,

cannot fully define. If it is true of intellect, 'a man sees the Self through the grace of the Creator'—much more is it true of love. Our love can guide us to Him only when it is illuminated by His Love.

'Herein know we love, not that we love God but that he loved us.'

'We love Him because He first loved us.'

Though the Bhakta passes from love to love, and at last attains the all-absorbing rapture—the love of Rādhā for her Kṛṣṇa—yet has he not encompassed the whole Love of God. The standard of Love that is Divine cannot be measured by the human. It must be GIVEN, REVEALED:—That is to say, it must possess transcendent quality, super-human reality, the grace that commands assent, nay, certainty, from man's most inward consciousness.

CHAPTER XII

THE YŌGA SYSTEM

1. THE IDEA OF ATTAINMENT THROUGH SUFFERING

THE idea that self-mortification is a means to spiritual attainment dates back to the dawn of Indian thought.

Even as far back as the *Rig Vēda*, we can find references to show that great purposes can be achieved through 'tapas' or the practice of austerities, 'The Creator underwent tapas before creating the world. Truth and right are born of tapas:—The fathers practised tapas, when they were on earth, so also the seven R̥sis. The purpose they had in view was the winning of bliss. Through their tapas they became invincible: they won heaven. Through tapas the world can be conquered'.¹

By the time of the Upaniṣads, the thought had become generally accepted by religious bodies.

'Brāhmaṇas seek to know Him by the study of the Vēda, by sacrifice, by penance, by fasting, and he who knows Him becomes a Muni. Wishing for that world (for Brahman) only, mendicants leave their homes.

Knowing this, the people of old did not wish for offspring. What shall we do with offspring, they

¹ Quoted from *Rig Vēda*, X by Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism*, p. 248.

said, we who have this Self and this world of Brahman? And they, having risen above the desire for sons, wealth, and new worlds wander about as mendicants.'¹

As in the *Rig Vēda* so in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* Brahman is represented as producing everything through tapas. Those too who search for the highest knowledge find it through practising tapas and faith in the forest, tranquil, wise and living on alms.²

In the *Taittirīyaka Upaniṣad* in reply to his son's request, 'Sir, teach me Brahman', the father answers: 'Try to know Brahman by penance, for penance is the means of knowing Brahman.'³

In *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* which is one of later date, there is a forecast of the philosophical system of Yōga.

'As oil in seeds, as butter in cream, as water in river beds, as fire in wood, so is the Self seized within the self if man looks for Him by truthfulness and penance (tapas).'⁴

The practice of Yōga, or religious discipline, is then defined.

'If a wise man hold his body with its three erect parts (chest, neck and head) even, and turn his senses with the mind towards the heart, he will then in the boat of Brahman cross all the torrents which cause fear.

'Compressing his breathings let him, who has subdued all motions, breathe forth through the nose with gentle breath. Let the wise man without

¹ *Brih. Up.* iv. 4-22.

³ *Taitt. Up.* iii. 2.

² *Muṇḍ. Up.* I. 8-9.

⁴ *Śvet. Up.* I. 15.

fail restrain his mind, that chariot yoked with vicious horses.

' Let him perform his exercises in a place level, pure, free from pebbles, fire and dust, delightful by its sounds, its water, and bowers, not painful to the eye, and full of shelters and caves.'¹ After this comes the description of the hypnotic trance and, in the following paragraph, that of the intensification of sensation that is the first fruit of Yōga.

We see from this *Upaniṣad* how the idea of tapas, or penance, and self-renunciation for the sake of Brahman, began now to be connected with the attainment of miraculous powers. It would seem as though the aim of the whole ascetic movement—'to yoke'² with Brahman, using as means some practical activity in contrast with the speculative method, (which contrast the *Bhagavad Gītā* brings out, using the term Yōga for action, and Sāṃkhya for speculation,)—now becomes tinged with the alternative meaning of the word Yōga—to go into trance, to meditate, and is beginning itself to branch off into a philosophical system.

Leaving however for the moment the philosophy of Yōga, which *Śvētāśvatara* foreshadows, we can follow the original idea of mortification as means to attainment, through all the great religious movements of India. We can see that the idea was intensified as men sought emancipation from Karma.

¹ See *Śvēt. Up.* ii. 17. 8-16.

² 'Yōga' comes from a word meaning to yoke.

Gōtama the Buddha strove to find enlightenment by subjecting himself to extreme discipline and fasting. And although he afterwards rejected the extreme method of self-torture, yet he too formed a monastic order, and required of his followers complete renunciation of home and ordinary life.

The followers of Mahāvīra, called Jains, were, as Farquhar says, 'the most extreme of the Renouncers. They gave up all care for their bodies, plucked out their hair by the roots, wore only a rag of clothing or else lived stark naked, ate no savoury food, drank no cold water, and never bathed. They also carried the practice of self-torture to great extremes. Meekness and uncomplaining endurance were amongst their highest virtues. Twelve years of severe ascetic practice were necessary to win release. After that, a Jain monk was allowed to starve himself to death if he chose to do so. At a later date monasteries were introduced into Jainism.'¹

All the more modern sects, both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava, have formed their own orders of ascetics, which have characteristic sect marks and which obey particular rules. The wandering Sādhu is one of the most common figures in India to-day. So too, it is a not uncommon sight to see the Yōgi on his bed of spikes, or to come across him measuring his length along the road as he makes his way to some sacred place of pilgrimage. A few weeks ago the writer saw some Jain ascetics who were walking all the way from

¹ *The Crown of Hinduism*, p. 258.

Bombay to Parasanath, a distance roughly, of a thousand miles. Instances beyond number could be recounted of hardships undergone, of self-torture inflicted, all from some religious motive.

2. THE PHILOSOPHY OF YŌGA

Yōga as a philosophical system belongs to the time of Patañjali, who lived about the third century before Christ. His philosophy takes the form of aphorisms, which, even with commentaries, are difficult to understand. They are contained in four chapters, and are about two hundred in number. Like the much later philosophy of Rāmānuja, which we touched upon in the last chapter, Patañjali's philosophy holds that there are three eternal principles, Matter (*prakṛtti*), the Individual (*puruṣa*) and God (*Īśvara*). The *puruṣa* or man's true nature is hidden by 'citta,' which analysed, consists of mind (*manas*), the 'I' principle (*ahaṅkāra*), and reason (*buddhi*). These are a form of matter. The purpose of Yōga then, is to set free from this lower form, the inward essence. Citta possesses both an emotional and an intellectual aspect. The method of checking the emotional aspect is through 'desirelessness', or want of attachment to worldly things. The method of checking the intellectual aspect is through 'constant practice' in keeping the mind fixed on one point. According to the Sūtra:—

'Yōga is the restraint of mental modifications.

'They are restrained by practice and desirelessness.

'Of these practice is the effort to secure steadiness.

‘ Desirelessness is the consciousness of supremacy in him who is free from thirst of perceptible and spiritual enjoyments.’¹

From concentration results trance, which is of two kinds :—the suppression of all external impressions ; and the suppression of all normal activities of mind. According to Patañjali, the type of mind best qualified to accomplish Yōga is that which feels ‘ the omnipresence of God.’ God as defined by him is—‘ a distinct *Puruṣa*, untouched by the vehicles of affection, action, fruition.’ He is omniscient, ‘ the Teacher of the Ancients, being unlimited by time.’ ‘ The sacred word “ OM ” connotes Him.’ The Yōgi must repeat it, and also understand its meaning.²

Further habits of mind needed to accomplish Yōga are, to avoid the nine sins or distractions, and to cultivate the virtues of compassion, friendliness, equanimity and purity.³

In the second chapter Patañjali explains further that body, mind and spirit must be brought under control. This can be effected through the ‘ eight accessories of Yōga :—Restraint, Observance, Posture, Regulation of Breath, Abstraction, Concentration, Meditation and Trance.’ The restraints are moral. They include abstinence from injury ; veracity ; abstinence from theft ; continence ; abstinence from avariciousness. In this connexion, it is interesting to note that the method auto-suggestion brings forward to-day to overcome temptation, is as old as Patañjali. He says, ‘ Upon

¹ *Yōga Sūtras*, 2,12,13,15. ² *Ibid.*, 23-28. ³ *Ibid.*, 30-33.

thoughts of sin troubling, habituation to the contrary.” And his commentator Vyāsa explains, ‘When during the practice of restraints and observances sinful thoughts give trouble, the mind is to be habituated to the contrary ideas.’ The observances are ‘Cleanliness, Contentment, Purificatory Action, Tapas, (or austerities), Study, and the making of the Lord the motive of all action.’

There are particular methods of bringing about concentration, by posture, by the expulsion and retention of breath, by focussing the mind upon one of the sense organs, or upon the light of consciousness—the thought ‘I am—’ or upon a dream object. Here again modern auto-suggestion follows Patañjali closely. While this ‘one-pointedness’ is being carried on, the mind ‘flows’ in the direction of the object desired to be understood. This is ‘meditation.’ And as Vyāsa explains, ‘When on account of the object of contemplation taking entire possession of the mind, contemplation shows forth only the light of the form of the contemplated object, and is devoid as it were, of its nature of self-cognition, then is it called trance.’ Concentration, meditation, trance, are the great instruments of attainment. By their means, the Yōgi can possess many psychic powers. He can see into the core of any object towards which the mind directs itself. He can know the past, the present, and the future. He can destroy Karma. But above these and other miraculous powers, he can achieve the highest attainment, which is emancipation of his real personality.

3. THE END SOUGHT BY THE YŌGI AND THE IDEAL END

Yet the self the Yōga seeks is but an abstract. In this is its failure. What is the Puruṣa? What is the end man seeks? What is God in whose selfhood man can find a place? In this rigid system of self-discipline that has lasted some thousands of years, that has not flinched at torture, that has renounced the world and all the world calls dear, that finding philosophical expression, foreshadows the method of self-discipline twentieth century enlightenment has evolved; in this system there is much that commands wonder, and much that commands awe. Where in human history can it find a parallel? Yet, though God-seeking, it lacks the light of a God-given end. It too needs a clearer definition of man's spiritual goal. It awaits the Christ. True, the end Christ reveals demands no less the stern restraint, the denial of self, the renunciation of the world. He too sets free man's hidden reality. But He turns the direction of the search for Self, from self. He turns the whole search outward. And He does this because the God He defines—man's end—is LOVE. He shows that if God is Love, Love, the root principle of man's being can be no abstract attainment, no end achieved apart from others: but must include these others, must through these very others find its own reality.

‘Herein know we love because He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath the world's goods, and

beholdeth his brother in need and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in Him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and truth.

‘Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God, and everyone that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is Love. Herein was the love of God manifested in our case, that God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation of our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another’.¹

And in comparison with this attainment, all knowledge, all psychic powers, all miracles, all austerities, count as naught.

‘If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

‘Love never faileth, but whether there be prophecies they shall be done away, whether there be tongues they shall cease, whether there be knowledge it shall be done away.’²

¹ *St. John's First Epistle*, iii. 16-iv. 11. ² *I Corinthians*, xiii.

CHAPTER XIII

INDIA'S SEARCH—AND ITS GOAL

1. UNITY LACKING IN WHAT INDIA HAS ATTAINED BY HER SEARCH FOR THE SPIRITUAL

THE most striking point that issues from this narration of the history of India's search for the spiritual is that unity is lacking—not in the zest and purpose with which the search is carried out, but in that which has been attained. What greater contrast could be found than 'Arahatship', as defined by the Buddha, and the 'Ātman' as defined by the Rṣis? Or again, what unity is there between the 'isolation' in pure thought attained by the Yōgi, and the Incarnate Vasudēva-Kṛṣṇa, and—contrast more startling—Gōpāla Kṛṣṇa, of the Bhaktas?

It is this multifarious nature that makes generalization as to what the Indian mystic really attains difficult, if not well-nigh impossible for the narrator. If the Yōgi be taken as type of the Indian mystic then it can be said¹ that he attains a great unthinkable Abstract Thought that is higher than what normal thinking faculties can achieve.

If the Buddha be taken as type of what India has attained at the apex of the mystical search, such attainment can be defined as character resulting from lofty discipline of the will. 'The Highest Good is

¹ See Chap. I above.

working in the way of virtue', said Aristotle. The same definition could be stated aptly in description of the Buddha's ideal. The Buddha sought no Transcendental Object as his Goal. He sought only a quality of character so other-than selfish that he counted it a flaw even to postulate a higher sphere for self. Self eliminated even from the Ideal;—Good for the sake of Good without hope of any reward;—this was Arahatsip; this finally brought the calm immortal Goal.

Attainment when the 'energy of intellect is grounded in itself' and pure thought is reached; attainment when the will finds the Good as the quality present in its own activity;—what definitions of the Goal could be more opposing? But there yet remains another definition. The great riot of emotion and fervent love that the Bhakta lets loose in the worship of Kṛṣṇa, representing a God who loves in human fashion, conflicts as much with the ideal of the Yōgi as it does with the ideal of the Buddha.

It would seem as though men having searched with intellect, with will, and with emotion, in turn, awaited still the great Unity that would co-ordinate the whole self (these three faculties) and would complete the search.

2. WITHOUT THIS GREAT UNITY ATTAINMENT IS IMPERFECT

No outside critic is needed to point the incompleteness of the results issuing from the search in its any one direction. Other directions taken are themselves

admissions of incompleteness and of failure. The Buddha sought for fuller salvation for men, only after he had experienced the inadequacy of abstraction to effect salvation. Again, though the quality of character he defined as the highest was a love embracing all living creatures, yet divorced from Divine help, from its Divine Prototype, this definition too, proved incomplete. Thus the Bhakta looked up to God, and attained the truth that the Highest is Love Divine. Yet by 'thinking of Divine things only in a human way'¹ love itself lacked the perfect definition, and awaited a more Divine interpretation than that which Kṛṣṇa gave it. Thus we must turn from the story of India's search for the spiritual with the great question, Who is the Goal of that search? What attainment forms its climax? How can we define the different aspects of what the search has achieved, in one great Unity? That there is a Unity every Hindu in his heart of hearts believes. As a Brāhmin pandit explained it to the writer :—'The way to Calcutta can be travelled on foot, or in a motor, or by train. So there are many ways to Brahman. Some find Him by works (karma), some by meditation. So too the Christian seeks Him one way, the Muhammadan another, the Hindu a third. Yet the Goal is one.'

That the Goal *is* one is a matter of faith, and not (on the face of it) a matter of deduction from the ends actually achieved by the various searchers.

¹ See quotation above from *Gaurāṅga and his Gospel* (Ch. IX).

If, though nominally setting out for Calcutta, one traveller were to arrive in Bombay and another in Madras, could it be said truthfully that the Goal was one ?

Yet not less diverse are the ends achieved by the many who set out to search for God. Reference has been made already¹ to the difference that exists between what the Christian mystic attains, and what is attained by the Yōgi. Though the search be one, is it true to say that the dynamic spirit of loving and devoted service is 'one' with the unrelated isolated Abstract ? Or, returning to the differences that exist in what India's own mystics have attained, is this Abstract 'one' with the all-embracing love of the Buddha ? If the Goal be truly one as well as the search, then some Unity greater than all the aspects yet disclosed by the searchers must exist to bind their diversity into a more complete whole. God can not be ONLY that which Will attains if Thought and Love have found Him also.

Yet if He be Reality for all three, if the Buddha, the Yōgi, and the Bhakta have all found one or other aspect of Him that is true, then yet another aspect is imperative to reveal Him in His Unity.

Thus India's great achievement points beyond to the need for Unity in defining God. It is not enough to say in faith that there is such a Unity. We must understand and accept the revelation of God as such.

¹ Chapter III.

3. THE REVELATION OF GOD AS PERSONALITY COMPLETES THE MYSTICS' DEFINITIONS

The Unity which links together the many aspects of mystical attainment can be no other than Divine Personality. And it is such Divine Personality that the Christian claims to find in Christ. If the claim be substantiated then will Christ be, not one among the many ways leading to the Unknown Goal, but Himself both Goal and Definition. Then will He harmonize the oft contradictory aspects of man's search for the spiritual. Then will He accept the greatest men have yet attained; and will call them to realize in His service greater attainment still. The thought of the Rṣi will in Him find fuller expression. The way of salvation that the Buddha brought to men will through Him be the more perfectly realized. He too will be the Divine Prototype of Love, and through Self-giving, free and entire, will satisfy the deepest yearnings of the Bhakta.

PART II

THE END DEFINED

CHAPTER I

THE APPEAL OF CHRIST TO INDIA

1. RELIGION IS A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SELF AND GOD

RELIGION that expresses itself only as belief in external events—historical or otherwise—is open to suspicion as to its sincerity. The ultimate relationship in religion is one that exists between the self and God. True, nature and history help us to define God, and the wisdom of the ages makes the concept of Him clear. But no definition that history can bring, no experience of another, can do more than supplement, illuminate, justify,—if my religion be true, and the relationship I have established with God genuine—the truth that exists for me myself.

Religion is realization. We have seen how time and again the East has reiterated this truth. ‘An ocean is that one seer—This seer is the Brahman world, dwells in Brahman.’ ‘He is my self within the heart, smaller than a corn of rice,—He also is my self within the heart greater than the earth, greater than the heaven, greater than all these worlds.’ The East has never doubted that the path to Brahman is through the path within—the deepening of selfhood, the realization of the spiritual, the laying hold of Infinite Realities. And it has counted that in this

attainment of the Divine Vision, in the sharing of the Divine Life, is man's highest goal, man's highest success, his highest world, his highest bliss. Through the ages, with great singleness of purpose, have saints and sages striven to draw men on from 'the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality.'

2. THE HISTORICAL AND THE DOCTRINAL CANNOT
BE SUBSTITUTED FOR INWARD VISION AND
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

In the West, Christianity has suffered much from neglect of the truth that religion is realization. To the devout mystic of the East the Christian religion has been made to appear bereft of what, to the East is the living truth of religion—a personal relationship between the self and God. This statement excludes of course the many Christians to whom belief is not less than the vision, and the realization of God in loving personal fellowship. For them, no doubt the Indian Bhakta has naught but sympathy and reverence. It is the general presentation of Christianity that has made it misunderstood both at home and abroad; that has led men to believe that doctrines regarding historical revelation, and an external scheme of salvation can be substituted for the inward spiritual vision, and the personal spiritual attainment of the individual soul. The writer came across an illustration of this misapprehension in some Sikh tracts that were distributed in the Golden Temple at Amritsar. In one tract on *Religion and the Religious Life* the question

is asked, 'What is religion?' 'Does it consist,' continues the writer of the tract, 'in precepts and dogmas, doctrines and theories? Does it mean a belief in some historic event, or a belief in something supernatural that passeth all human understanding or experience? Does it require to follow the laws and regulations revealed to some person in the past in a supernatural way, the truth of which is proved not by experience of our own souls but by the miracles which the same person wrought?' After dismissing such definitions of religion on the ground that the evidence brought forward to establish them is external, the writer proceeds to define religion as 'the attempt after God-vision.' God-vision (he says) does not mean 'the soul coming in contact with something external to its own being, but rather the soul diving deep into its own being to realize the fundamental Reality, of which it is conscious already, though dimly.' 'He that pervades the universe also dwells in the body. He who seeketh, shall find Him.' If the definitions that are here rejected are meant to summarize the Christian religion, then this Sikh writer in common with many (Christian or other) has a very distorted idea of what Christianity at its greatest means. An objective historical Christ, whose Divinity is guaranteed by miracle, is not the foundation upon which the spiritually minded Christian builds up his faith in the Revelation of God. No miracle can guarantee Divinity. Divinity is a quality, a beauty, a transcendence, a power compelling conviction, a spiritual illumination bringing the certainty of

having realized the 'God-vision.' It is the dynamic that uncovers the 'soul's fundamental Reality.' The merely historical, however well attested, could not command assent to Divinity thus defined. It is spiritual apprehension; or, what may be called, Divine-appreciation, that forms the foundation of the Christian's faith in Christ. And, as such, his faith is not at basis other in its aim than the faith of the Sikh. The latter too seeks the Vision. He too is dimly conscious of a Divine he can 'appreciate' and understand.

3. INDIA NEEDS A GREATER EMPHASIS PUT UPON SPIRITUAL APPRECIATION

Misapprehension of Christianity has certainly arisen among the spiritually minded in India. The cause lies in the emphasis the West has placed upon intellectual acceptance of Christian doctrine, and its neglect of this aspect of subjective experience.

Not intellectual acceptance of religious belief, but Spiritual Realization is the truth that India through the centuries has sought. And not the objective Christ, but the subjective Christ of experience can satisfy and complete her search. For the subjective Christ is the God-vision, the definition of Divine Grace stooping to save. He is the inward dynamic which makes God-realization a living experience, a triumphant certainty. Into this experience, as language of the spiritual, the life of the objective Christ enters, illuminating that which otherwise is but dimly known. '—Our true Life came down hither and bore our

death—and He thundered, calling aloud to us to return hence to Him into that secret place, whence He came forth to us into the Virgin's womb wherein He espoused the human creation, our mortal flesh, that it might not be for ever mortal;—and thence—calling aloud by words, deeds, death, life, descent, ascension; crying aloud to us to return unto Him. And He departed from our eyes that we might return into our heart, and there find Him. For He departed, and lo He is here.' ¹

4. CHRIST, IN SATISFYING SPIRITUAL CRAVING, UNFOLDS WITHIN, THE EXPERIENCE OF THE DIVINE

The appeal of Christ to India is to her depth of spiritual apprehension. He speaks to the craving of the spirit; to the inward capacity to see and know. 'An ocean is that one seer.' No one more than Christ knew the futility of striving to define God other than as subjective experience. Even though as concrete Reality He entered human history, it still remained for men to see Him with the eye of faith; that to faith—that is, to spiritual apprehension, to spiritual appreciation, to spiritual craving,—He might reveal the perfection of the Infinite within. The whole stress of His life was upon the awakening of such capacity for the spiritual in man; upon the creation of vision; upon being to men Himself, within them, a growing experience of the Divine.

¹ St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. 4, XII.

And it is even thus, as satisfying the spirit's craving, as bringing God within in personal realization, that Christ will best fulfil the ideal of the ancient Rsis, and the desire of India's sons to-day.

'Too late I loved Thee O Thou Beauty of ancient days. Too late I loved Thee and behold Thou wert within and I abroad, and there I searched for Thee.—Thou wert with me, but I was not with Thee.—Thou calledst, and shoutedst and burstedst my deafness. Thou flashedst, shonest, and scatteredst my blindness. Thou breathedst odours and I drew in my breath, and pant for Thee. I tasted, and hunger and thirst. Thou touchedst me, and I burned for Thy peace. When I shall with my whole self cleave to Thee, I shall nowhere have sorrow, or labour; and my life shall wholly live, as wholly full of Thee.'¹
And again:—

'Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it rest in Thee.'²

The craving of the spirit for God has been thus expressed. And nowhere is the satisfaction of this craving such triumphant certainty as where Christ is brought within:—

'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? Even as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long, we were accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all

¹ *Confessions of St. Augustine*, Bk. 10, 27.

² *Ibid.* Bk. 1, 1.

these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.’¹

¹ *St. Paul to the Romans*, viii, 34-39.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL FOCUS

1. THE INDIVIDUAL SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE FINDS A PARALLEL IN THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHERS

It is a misconception for which Christians themselves are responsible that the Christian religion can be defined—as the Sikh writer quoted implies—as belief in an historic supernatural event proved, not by experience of our own souls, but by miracles attested by witnesses long dead.

The Christian religion is, or should be, the personal realization of God in loving fellowship ; in the acceptance of Divine Grace which stoops to save ; in a voluntary dying to sin and self and the world ; in the expression of the God-life in a life of devoted service and of love. God enters the self as spiritual dynamic, purifying will, illuminating thought, satisfying craving, unfolding the perfection for which, in all ages, men have sought. Each self must seek the Vision, but in seeking it the Christian is not blind to what through the centuries has been achieved by others who also sought and found. Each self must find salvation in sacrifice of the lower nature, in personal contact with the Divine, in attainment of the God-presence ; but in finding, the Christian does not deny to the experience of others attainment just as real.

‘ If any man doeth the will of God he will know the doctrine whether it be of God.’

The beginning of Christian belief is to need God. Having compared the value of things temporal with things spiritual, it is to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to crave the spiritual. Then, so surely as Rṣi, saint and prophet in the past, hungering, were filled, will the soul that craves for God be satisfied by God. But at the same time, in attainment the soul should be ready to admit that the truth of God as He exists to-day for self, is the truth of God, sought for, and attained by others.

There is unity running through human history. We tend to paint lifeless characters—characters that have no relationship with ourselves—upon the screen of the past. We forget that those whom we paint once lived, and thought, and suffered, and faced the same ultimate questions of existence ; and found too some solution that satisfied them, just as we are doing today.

While it is true that my own spirit must substantiate its claim to exist and to realize God ; while in seeking God it must pass from the world of time into an eternal ‘ Now ’ ; yet to others who sought through the long centuries back, even as to me, God was still Reality ; and in the history of the past, in the mistakes and achievements of the past, can we find a mirror of our own struggle and attainment. We must then go forward in the present ; but because of the unity of the race, because of the common nature, and Source, and Goal of man, we can also go forward, guided by the past. We can find the depth of the

eternal 'Now' in the experience of prophet, saint, and martyr, as well as in our own. God, who is the Reality of my own spirit is the ever-present, and eternal Spirit interpenetrating all time. Thus can those who seek Him in the present, find Him through those who sought Him in the past.

It is not in being a supernatural historic event that Christianity primarily makes its appeal to the religious consciousness. It is because it is proved by the experience of our own souls. But because that which the human spirit now can experience of God can be found more deeply expressed in the experience of the race; all that we are, all that we strive to become, can be seen mirrored in the past. Mankind is one, and so is its striving and attainment.

2. OUR INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE WILL SUPPLY THE TRUE INTERPRETATION OF WHAT OTHERS EXPERIENCED IN THE PAST

If we seek to-day, it is certain we shall find. We might call it a 'supernatural event' in the individual history that we should find Him.—It depends upon our point of view: upon our premises. A materialist who denies the Divine origin of man would call it supernatural, unintelligible. Those of us who believe in God but count it the completion of our nature, when, to the inward consciousness, He makes Himself known.

But the race too has sought Him. We have learnt how India has sought Him. In the history of the Jews we can read the history of another search. As we read, we shall recognize types and conditions of

men, not unlike men we ourselves know. It is important to visualize history, not as dead, but as living ; and to interpret different levels and grades of achievement from the aspect of our own individual lives, and the lives of men about us. If then we can remember our first childish induction that God exists, our growing consciousness of His authority and will, the first clinging of trust, the interpretation of His overshadowing care through the success or failure of our outward circumstances, we can the better understand the same experiences when we find them reflected in the story of Israel's spiritual growth.

It may be, too, that we have learnt the purging quality of suffering. We may have found God in misfortune. We may have learnt how 'He healeth those who are broken in heart, and giveth medicine to heal their sickness.'

It was thus in suffering that Israel learnt of His nearness, and formulated the hope of His Presence in their midst.

If God-realization is possible to the individual, why is it conceived impossible to the race ? To the individual a long discipline and spiritual awakening is necessary before God can be known ;—given the same discipline and the awakening of kindred faculties, why should history not make Him known ?

God exists, and He exists for us to-day. In this lies our standard of judgment in testing what is true in the past. And it is just the experience of our own souls that proves the truth of Christ as Divine Revelation.

What other God is it possible to realize? An Absolute? An Autocratic Power? A Blind Necessity? No, the only God it is possible for us to realize is such a God as Christ revealed. His search among the poor is the search of God in all eternity. His Cross is the sin which mars God's perfect work. His Resurrection is the triumph which spirit can attain. The only God that I can realize, if I seek Him truly, is One who stoops to meet my search, and reward it with self-giving, full, free and satisfying.

3. THE PAST IN TURN MAY INTERPRET OUR EXPERIENCE AND CURE US OF SELF-DECEPTION

The story of Israel's search for God and of Israel's attainment, then follows the line of the individual search and attainment. All grades of spiritual consciousness represented in the manifold types and conditions of men known to us to-day can be seen reflected in Israel's history. The types there are as extreme as those of the simple animist, who dashes the blood of his victim on tree or stone, or of the man who tries to avert misfortune through propitiating sacrifice; and the philosopher or poet who seeks for God in inward consciousness, and the ethical reformer who strives for social purity and national righteousness. Israel thus represents the racial movement, or effort, towards Spiritual Realization. If their attainment then should hold relationship with our attainment, so too should their difficulties and failures illuminate ours. The advantages in recognizing and profiting by such an objective view of the growth of spiritual

selfhood must be obvious to the thoughtful. I agree with the attitude that the individual realization of God, the fullest development of each personality in its Divine type, is the purpose and goal of religion. But is the Vision clear to all alike? Even those who reach lofty peaks of spiritual attainment do not consistently define the object of their search. Above all, they emphasize the difficulties of the path they have followed. What of the self-discipline and self-sacrifice of the Rsis? Who to-day is ready to follow in their footsteps? What of the parable of Indra and its meaning?—A god who searched for the meaning of the spiritual self for one hundred and one years, and in the end scarcely found what he sought?

Nothing is so simple in religion as self-deception. The mind passes lightly over faults in self which it is only too ready to condemn in others. Seen in historical focus, men can learn to recognize their own sins. For example, there are many to-day in India who imagine that they truly seek for God, who nevertheless view lightly the existence of idolatry all around them. The same thing applies to social injustice, and to formality in religion. Mirrored in the lives of men of the past, we see how abhorrent all these things are to God, and how the Spirit of God taught that, not through image but through well doing, not in oppression but in mercy, not in outward form but in heart, is His cause advanced.

The history of the Jews thus not only corroborates the experience which each individual may and can live through, but it mirrors the difficulties that lie in the

path to spiritual achievement. Mankind is one, and so is the path which men must tread from sense to spirit.

4. ST. PAUL'S ILLUSTRATION OF THE VALUE OF HISTORY IN ILLUMINATING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

This historical focus St. Paul expresses very beautifully :—

‘Brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them—neither let us commit fornication as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.—Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.’¹

¹ *I Corinthians*, x. 6 ff.

CHAPTER III

SPIRITUAL REALIZATION IN HISTORY

1. THE COMPOSITE NATURE OF THE BIBLE

THE history of the spiritual development of mankind is found in the Bible. The Bible is not a simple Book to read. I can imagine the perplexity of one who opens it for the first time, and without any knowledge of Biblical research, starts to read it from the beginning.

Even a superficial glance through it shows us that it is not a single book but a collection of books which belong to different periods of history. To-day scholars can see deeper than this, and can find in sections that appear to be units (such as the first five books, or the Psalms, or Proverbs) a further synthesis of material belonging to different authors and different dates.

Thus as we come to study the history of spiritual development in the work of the prophets we find that we must begin—not with those whose names and lives are known, but with an unknown writer who lived some ten centuries before Christ, and whose writing has been merged in that of another prophet, and again re-edited at a later date. These two earlier writers can be traced by the name each gives to God. The first, whose narrative begins at *Genesis* ii, v. 4 uses

the name Jehovah or Lord; the second, whose narrative begins with the story of Abraham (ch. xx) uses the name Elohim or God. The later editor of these combined authors can be characterized by his sacerdotalism:—by his insertion of sections dealing with the origin of ceremonial institutions of the ancient Hebrews—the Sabbath, Circumcision, Passover, etc.

Scholars call the first writer 'J'; the second 'E'; and the last 'P'.¹

2. 'J's' VISION OF MAN'S GOAL AND THE WAY BY WHICH IT CAN BE ATTAINED

'J' was a man deeply imbued with the Spirit of God. He saw behind all nature and all history the activity of a Holy God. He was a man of culture, and was acquainted with events² and traditions of his nation's past. He had knowledge of any literature that formed the social heritage of his time³:—national songs of wars, old mythological legends that had come to Israel from Assyrian sources, ancient codes of laws. He was a literary genius too, and breathed into the dead bones of the patriarchs and of Moses, life and character.

The great message of the Old Testament originates with J. God has created man for Himself. The home He has prepared for man satisfies every faculty.

¹See Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 10.

²*Num.* xxi, 14–18; *Josh.* x, 12–13.

³*Ancient songs*, *Gen.* ix. 26. c. xxvii, 39–40.

But God requires of him obedience to His will. To work for God, to rejoice in his Presence, to walk and talk with Him is part of the Divine purpose for humanity. That which mars His purpose and leads to man's banishment from His Presence is man's own sin.

And do not children and the nobler members of humanity testify to the truth of this thought? Surely in our own experience we find that before knowledge of good and evil comes, natural objects satisfy childhood's faculties; and children in some subtle mysterious way walk and speak with God as few ever do in after life. The appetites, temptations and baser interests close the mind to loftier influences; and result in man's banishment from the 'garden'.

Longfellow expresses this thought in his poem on 'Childhood'.

'There was a time when I was very young
When my whole frame was but an ell in height
Sweetly as I recall it tears do fall
And therefore I recall it with delight.

Then seemed to me this world far less in size
Likewise it seemed to me less wicked far.
Like points in heaven I saw the stars arise
And longed for wings that I might catch a star.

Wondering I saw God's sun through western
[skies

Sink in the ocean's golden lap at night
And yet upon the morrow early rise
And paint the eastern heaven with crimson light—

They perished, the blithe days of boyhood
[perished]

And all the gladness, all the peace I knew.
Now have I but their memory fondly cherished
God! may I never lose that too!'

The thought implied in the story of Eden, is the thought underlying the call of Abram.¹ It is a call to renew the relationship of trust and happiness that is God's purpose for man. 'Fear not Abram' Jehovah says, 'I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.' The renewal of the earthly Eden—a prosperous and blessed life as result of obedience—is the promise held out to him.

The same promise is made to Isaac² and to Jacob.³

Then through the years the tragedy of Eden is repeated. The descendants of Jacob become the slaves of Egypt. Crushed under hard taskmasters, all knowledge of Jehovah is forgotten. It is the eternal parable of humanity. And once more the message comes, 'I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.'—⁴

¹ *Gen.* xv. 1.

² *Gen.* xxviii. 13.

² *Gen.* xxvi. 3.

⁴ *Exodus* iii. 7-8.

The work which J commenced¹ and which E elaborated some fifty years later became more explicitly defined by the eighth-fifth century prophets.

3. SUMMARY OF THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE TIMES OF THE PROPHETS

Before summarising the part taken by them in the history of spiritual development, an outline of the specific national movements that were bound up with the prophetic order from the eighth to the fifth centuries B.C. may not be out of place. In the eighth century, an Assyrian conquest threatened and ultimately swept over the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Amos and Hosea brought a message of its downfall. Almost contemporary with them, Isaiah and Micah in South Israel, dealt with the evils of their time and strove for reformation.

After the fall of the Assyrian empire a further danger from Egypt was threatening, but the rise of Chaldaea frustrated it. In the fourth year of Jehoia-kim's reign the battle of Carchemish between Necah of Egypt, and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon resulted in victory for the Chaldeans; and this affected Judah through the provinces of Egypt—of which it was one—passing over to the conqueror. The king of Judah

¹ It is highly probable that, as Prof. Ottley points out, Moses was the first of the prophets, and knowledge of Jehovah dates much further back than J. This does not affect my point that J gives the first historical record of the thought that exercised such a powerful influence in Israel, viz., that God has created man for Himself, but demands of man obedience, that He may walk with him.

rebelled after three years, and subsequent history witnessed a fast-falling doom upon Jewish nationality. About four years later Jerusalem was destroyed ; while Zedekiah, who was then king, having been blinded and bound in chains, was carried off to Babylon.

The prophets of the seventh century—the Chaldean period—as prophets were bound up with the disasters of the times. The poet Nahum pronounced the destruction of the enemies of God's people. Zephaniah saw in these enemies an instrument of God's wrath and a means of purification. Habakkuk, more philosophically than ethically inclined, ponders upon God's ways and means. While Jeremiah cries to heedless ears a passionate warning.

Ezekiel was the great prophet-philosopher of the Exile. With Ezekiel the political becomes subservient to the theological ; and Israel as a theocracy, Israel a missionary to the nations, Israel once faithless, now in a peculiar sense becomes a hope for ' Jehovah-Shammah '—God is there.

The dates of some of the prophets are hotly contested, but it is generally admitted to-day that Isaiah Chaps. xl ff, the subject matter of which chiefly concerns us, belongs to the close of the Exile. For the remainder Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were prophets of the Return, and are of chief importance as marking the actual road of development which the greater thought of Israel planned, and far outstepped.

The writings of the prophets, when read in the light of knowledge of their times, command a deep sense of beauty and of inspiration.

We have already seen how the unknown prophet of South Israel infused into ancient mythology and traditions of the past, the living thought of a righteous God. It was to a nation emerging out of heathenism, a nation that clung to idolatry, and sacrifice, whose very worship was often stained with immorality, that like a breath of the Divine the influence of these prophets came.

4. THE MESSAGE OF AMOS. GOD REQUIRES RIGHTEOUSNESS IN MAN

In the days of Amos Israel retained the 'groves' of Bethel and Gilgal; the idols Moloch and Chiun¹. In Israel in the palaces of the rich there was violence and robbery, oppression of the poor, drunkenness and revelry. Among the people there was disregard of Jehovah's statutes. The very ceremonial of His sacrifices and feasts was stained with evil. In the service of the idols of Bethel the Lord God was forgotten, and corruption spread throughout the land.

Then into the midst of the king's palaces and the feasts of Bethel arrived a herdsman. Following his herds he had pondered much upon the antithesis of good and evil; and now with the force of the wild animals he had often fought with in the jungle, he uttered the laws of righteousness like the voice and 'roaring of Jehovah.'

'The virgin of Israel is fallen; she will no more rise. She lieth forsaken upon her land; there is none

¹ *Amos* v, 26.

to raise her up. For thus saith the Lord God. The city that went forth a thousand shall have an hundred left, and that which went forth a hundred, shall have ten left to the house of Israel. For thus saith Jehovah unto the house of Israel, seek ye me and ye shall live—seek Jehovah and ye shall live, lest he break out like a fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour and there be none to quench it in Bethel: ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and cast down righteousness to the earth seek him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth deep darkness into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; Jehovah is his name; that causeth destruction to flash upon the strong, so that destruction cometh upon the fortress.—Seek good and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, shall be with you as ye say. Hate the evil and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate; it may be that Jehovah, the God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph—. I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea though ye offer me your burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them, neither will regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of your songs, for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgement roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Yea ye have borne Siccuth your king and Chium your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause

you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts.' ¹

The significance of the teaching of Amos lies in his description of Jehovah as the Supreme Ruler of the world and of nature; in the moral character he ascribes to Him; and in the thought that social and individual injustice, selfish luxury, and empty ceremonial religion are an offence against His righteousness which can be vindicated only in the destruction of Israel.

5. THE MESSAGE OF HOSEA. GOD LOVES THE SINNER BUT HATES THE OFFENCE

The strain of the 'fallen virgin', is carried through the pleading of Hosea. He too throws light upon the corrupt conditions in Israel. There was no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of Jehovah in the land. There was nought but swearing, breaking faith, killing, stealing and committing adultery. ²

The priests were as a troop of robbers lying in wait to murder.

The king and the princes were drunkards and adulterers. The people were idolatrous and faithless to God's laws.

Yet though Jehovah comes to punish, very tender is He in His pleading, torn between His love for the sinner and His horror at the offence.

'When Israel was a child then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt—they sacrificed unto the

¹ Amos v, 2-10, 14-16, 21-25.

² Hos. iv, 2.

Baalim, and burnt incense to graven images. Yet I taught Ephraim to go ; I took them on my arms ; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love ; and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat before them. He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return. And the sword shall fall upon his cities—

How shall I give thee up Ephraim ? How shall I deliver thee, Israel ? mine heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim for I am God and not man ; the Holy One in the midst of thee.’¹

6. GOD WITH US, THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

Isaiah, like the humbler prophets of the northern kingdom of Israel, pictures the social and religious evils of his time. The princes had become the companions of thieves, the judges took bribes, the worship of Jehovah was but formal without realization of the relationship between religion and conduct. ‘How is the faithful city become an harlot’, cries Isaiah, ‘She was full of judgment. Righteousness lodged in her but now murderers.’

But Isaiah formulates a hope for Israel which permeates all his denunciation, promises, teaching, reforms, political associations ; and becomes the one

¹ *Hos.* xi, 1-9.

great object of his work of purification. 'This hope is 'Immanu El', God with us, 'the Holy One of Israel in the midst of Zion.'

When the purifying scourge of Assyria should be over, and the remnant of Jacob should again be governed by their king of David's stock, in that day the hope should be realized and Israel, the faithless, the corrupt, should say :

'Jehovah is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation—

Give thanks unto Jehovah, call upon his name.

Make known his doings among the peoples.

Make mention that his name is exalted.

Cry aloud and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion,

For great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.'¹

7. OTHER VISIONS OF GOD'S PRESENCE AMONG MEN

Micah and Jeremiah, in common with these other pre-exile prophets quoted, work out the three points already noted. They too condemn idolatry, heathen ritual, and the lack of justice, mercy and truth. They foretell a coming doom, which they interpret as disciplinary punishment. And they give the hope that when Israel has been purified God will be found in their midst. The manner of His coming is variously expressed. In one place He is the Shepherd-Ruler who will feed his flock in the strength of Jehovah.²

¹ *Is.* xii, 2, 4, 6.

² *Micah* v, 4.

In another He deposes His rule to David, the ideal king.¹ In one great passage in Jeremiah He is represented as coming in men's hearts. 'Behold the days will come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel—this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel—I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.'²

With the dismemberment of Israel through the Exile the thought here prefigured by Jeremiah—that God must be realized by the individual—becomes emphasized.

8. GOD'S PRESENCE IN AN INDIVIDUAL REALIZATION

Israel of the Exile still clung to old idolatries, and repelled the idea that their suffering was the just punishment of their evil works. They buoyed themselves up with false hopes, seeing that Jerusalem had not fallen. Ezekiel continued prophetic denunciation against the nation as a whole; as well as against those who were in captivity. But the individual unit rather than the social unit, by reason of this division, is becoming more marked. Ezekiel's most important

¹ *Jer.* xxx, 9.

² *Ibid.*, xxxi, 31-34.

contribution to religious thought was that each individual must work out his own salvation, or must be responsible individually for his own destruction. He stated explicitly that his prophetic mission was to the individual.¹ Wickedness, he taught, would bring death to the evil-doer; the righteousness of the righteous would deliver him only so long as he remained in the righteous path. 'The soul that sinneth it shall die; but if the wicked turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all the statutes and do that which is lawful and right he shall surely live, he shall not die.'² In almost the same words three times throughout his book Ezekiel insists upon the individuality of the soul before God. 'When the righteous turneth from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, he shall even die therein. And when the wicked turneth from his wickedness and doeth that which is lawful and right he shall live thereby.—O house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways.'²

The hope of God's Presence in the heart is expressed by Ezekiel in some beautiful passages. Jehovah will seek his sheep and will deliver them out of all places whither they have been scattered in the day of clouds and thick darkness. He will seek that which was lost, and will bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick. 'For thus saith the Lord Jehovah. Behold I myself, even I, will search for my sheep and will seek them out.'³

¹ *Ez.* xxxiii.² *Ibid.* 19.³ *Ch.* xxxiv. 10 to end.

And when He has found them He will feed them with good pasture.

Two chapters further on the parable is interpreted.

‘For thus saith the Lord Jehovah—I will take you from among the nations and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and shall be my people, and I will be your God.’¹

9. ATTAINMENT THROUGH SUFFERING

The Exile lasted long—some sixty years. Israel was a wanderer in strange lands. Hope of restoration, and of Jehovah’s coming grew dim.

Then came the voice of another prophet, pleading, pitying, confirming and triumphing.² Israel’s sufferings are at an end. Cyrus even now is on his way to deliver and to crush for ever the power of the Babylonian oppressor.

‘Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her

¹ *Ez.* xxxvi, 24-28.

² *Is.* xl, 66.

iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.' ¹

Jehovah has vindicated His holiness, He is about to vindicate His mercy. Israel, purified through affliction, is now worthy to be Jehovah's messenger to all nations. Therefore doth Jehovah make bare His holy arm in the eyes of all nations, and to all the ends of the earth doth show the salvation of Israel's God.

Yet, who will have eyes to see in the liberated slaves the chosen of the Almighty? ² Who will listen to the message that suffering brings of God? Jehovah's messenger to the nations, yea to kings, is one whose visage is so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. In him is no comeliness or beauty. He is like a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground.

All that the human heart has known of contempt and humiliation has he experienced. All that the human heart has endured of anguish and despair has he borne.

But he has not suffered alone, or in vain. He has probed to the core of suffering, and has found that that core is sin. In his sin he has interpreted the price of all sin. 'Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone

¹ *Is.* xl, 1.

² *Is.* lii, 14.

astray—and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.’¹

But suffering has purified him. In his patience and subjection to the Will of God, God’s end has been attained. Oppression has worked in him humility. His soul has passed through the sacrificial fire in which all sin is burnt away. ‘He was oppressed yet he humbled himself, and opened not his mouth. As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, yea he opened not his mouth.’²

Thus, as he is one with human suffering, so can man be one with him in his attainment. By knowledge of his righteousness, many shall be made righteous. His burden has not been his only, but the load of sin of all, whom by his attainment he shall have saved from sin. ‘He bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.’³ As he illuminates the price of sin by his anguish, so he illuminates the way to spiritual attainment. He becomes a link, as it were, between the higher he has sought and realized, and the transgression of mankind.

10. SUMMARY: THE PATH TO SPIRITUAL REALIZATION

We can now sum up the steps which men followed in the realization of the spiritual.

The first step was that man is made for God, but sin comes between.

As early as the interpretation given by the unknown

¹ *Is.* liii, 4.

² *Ibid.* 7.

³ *Ibid.* 12.

writer J to the old story of Eden it was realized that sin entails suffering.

Why ? At first the reason given was one external to the human spirit. God is righteous, therefore He punishes the sinner.

Gradually the reason given became internal. If God is righteous, nought but a righteous spirit can find communion with Him. Suffering is a purifying fire ; and the character God requires in those who seek Him, is patience and faith, which remain like the pure metal of spirit, after suffering has done its work.

Thus far did the history of spiritual attainment go. Men had caught a vision of what union with God entailed. They had learnt that God required an inward beauty of character. They felt that all that they themselves had realized through suffering was the highest goal for mankind ; and in opening up the vision, in their realization, they could bear and thus lighten the sins of many. It was not enough to attain for self. Jehovah's Suffering Servant was the messenger to the nations.

It was thus the prophets defined the highest for man.

Not then did they know that this highest defined for man was also defining God. They might have known. They had looked for His Presence among men. They had learnt that He comes to men, as, still clinging to Him they pass along the path of suffering. They did not see that Jehovah, present in the end, must be present in the process of attainment. They hardly dared to think that He would tread the self-same path by which He draws men to Himself.

CHAPTER IV

THE GREAT AWAKENER

1. SPIRITUAL APPRECIATION, AND THE IDEAL OF THE SUFFERING SERVANT

THE appeal of Christ is to spiritual apprehension. The man of worldly and sensual ideals, the selfish, the bigot, the spiritually blind, can no more appreciate Him to-day, than they could appreciate Him when He stood amongst opportunists and the Pharisees of old. He belongs to a sphere where our worldly scale of values counts as naught. Like the Suffering Servant of Jehovah with whom His followers came to identify Him, He has no pomp, no grandeur, 'no beauty that we should desire Him.' 'His visage was so marred, more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.'

It took many centuries of human history for men to find in suffering a stepping-stone to God. It took great spiritual insight to see in the faith and humility of the exile disciplined thus through suffering, a power more permanent and far reaching than that of the Babylonian armies.

Spiritual apprehension is not a simple thing, nor is appreciation of the Christ. The artist sees in the rose a work of surpassing beauty, a marvel of creation. The child tears the petals, and throws them on the

ground. Words cannot convince where the faculty does not exist. Men are more ready still to bow before an autocratic King, than before one who, girded with a towel, washes His disciples' feet. Yet if they seek deeper, and yet deeper into spiritual experience, they come to find a beauty in a Responding God, a help in a God who stoops to serve—even themselves; an inspiration in a God whom to know, whom to realize, must come to them in Living Presence; a beauty, a help, a vision, that the God-King upon His Throne can never give them.

2. THE MIRACLE OF ATTAINMENT

Those who have truly sought are not enemies of Christ. The ancient R̥ṣis, no less than the prophets, foreshadowed Him, in their conception of Brahman responding to man's search: of Brahman present in realization. To believe at all that God responds to self is to postulate the type of God that Christ more fully revealed. What is self that the Lord of the universe should stoop to hear and help? If we can believe in the individual response to self, why should we disbelieve in the universal response to mankind? The Jewish people mark a great national movement towards the realization of God. They represent on a great national scale the groping towards the unseen, the spiritual, that the search of the R̥ṣi and the Bhakta represents in the individual life. We have seen how in spite of sin and failure the prophets still beckoned on. And at last they beckoned not in vain.

Through affliction, desolation, exile, there arose from the remnant of Jehovah's 'peculiar' people, a purged and chastened Israel, Jehovah's 'Suffering Servant.' But not even then did the highest for man, defined thus, become the universal type, the accepted standard for God. With the restoration, the Jews formulated the original Messianic Hope of the earlier prophets. They once again sought an earthly kingdom, and earthly greatness. Ezekiel's spirituality was forgotten; but his legalism¹ was obeyed to the letter. Yet the spiritual never dies. If exiled slaves defined the highest for mankind, it was at last a woman who realized it. To Mary, the mother of Jesus, the hope of Israel was more than a Messianic Kingdom. It was 'Emmanu El', 'God with us.' She visualized in the deepest humility and faith, the certainty of His coming amongst men. And the God whom she felt would come was He who 'fileth the hungry, and exalteth those of low degree.'

Was His coming then a miracle? Miracle is a term that must be taken to mean a sequence of events belonging to an order higher than the ordinary. The application of the term 'Miracle' to the mystery of the Incarnation brings the right emphasis upon that which was truly the Divine—the character of Christ, its spirituality, its transcendence; the term seems to say 'That which was unique must have had an origin more than ordinary.' It expresses the unknown sequence, but itself does not define the Divine.

¹ *Ez.* xl to end.

There has been belief in miraculous births in other religions. If the miracle is taken away in these cases, nothing 'Divine' remains. But if the birth of Christ were taken out of the Gospel records and found to be—not history—but some later addition to the records which sought to explain the problem that the life suggests—even if there were no record of the birth at all, the Divinity of Christ would still remain, demanding some explanation as to origin.

This much we know as to the 'conditions' present in the birth of Christ. He came as the end of God-seeking. He came to fulfil the spirituality of the Virgin, and the highest that humanity had attained. In some mysterious way Israel's God-seeking, God-hungering, culminated in Him. Inwardness of vision, humility, beauty and purity of character, all that the prophets counted Divine, found through Him Divine response.

For He Himself came, not as one seeking, but as One who satisfies man's search. He came not as One who strives for God through suffering, but as One who tries to reach man's heart, in spite of the suffering man's sin encircles round it. He came as man's attainment; as the spiritual realized; as the Divine which quickens.

3. CHRIST'S PURPOSE

It is thus, as a Divine grace responding to man's universal search for God; as a Great Awakener of the

souls of men ; that history depicts Christ. His whole being was animated with the purpose of bringing to men the realization of God. To this end He toiled. In this end He attained. ' For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they may themselves also may be sanctified in truth.'

Men to whom He sought to bring a consciousness of the Eternal, were not unlike men as they are to-day. Conservatism, stereotyped conceptions of God, time-service, ignorance, selfishness, confronted Him. From the beginning He understood the supreme difficulties of His task, and counted it His Divine prerogative to overcome them. Not only did He accept the ' Suffering Servant ' as His definition of the highest for His followers:—'—Blessed are the poor in spirit', ' Blessed are the meek', ' Blessed are they that mourn', ' Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness', ' Blessed are the persecuted for righteousness sake'':—but He accepted the attainment achieved by the Suffering Servant as the definition of His own Divine task.

' The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ²

Because He anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor.

He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,

And recovering of sight to the blind.

¹ *St. Matt.*, v, 1-6.

² *Isaiah* lxi, 1-2, and *St. Luke* iv, 16-20.

To set at liberty them that are bruised
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.'

As the needs of men grew more and more apparent (just those needs indicated by hatred, time-service, materialism, ignorance, selfishness), His purpose grew more and more intense. As Teacher and Healer He did not break through the worldly vision of those whom He sought to bring into conscious realization of God. Pharisees went about to destroy Him. The crowd grossly misapprehended Him. Disciples hoped to gain from him worldly rule. All lacked the single vision of the search for God.

And THIS He had come to give them. As Teacher and Healer they would not let Him give it to them. He saw then that He must give it to them through another way. He saw that just such singleness of purpose **MUST BE BRANDED WITH BURNING LOVE UPON MEN'S HEARTS.** He saw that He must identify Himself more completely with this greatest of human needs—Man's need for God. Even consciousness of this need was rendered impossible by the conventions, the ambitions, the conditions of men's lives. But He, the Anointed, had come to preach, to liberate, to illuminate. If the poor, the captive, the blind, the bruised, were poorer, more sense bound, more grossly ignorant, more crushed by the load of custom than at first He had imagined, His method of liberating them only must change, **NOT HIS PURPOSE.**

4. THE GREAT AWAKENER OF THE SOULS OF MEN.

Thus identifying Himself with the fullest extent of their need—with the poverty of spirit that has not power to rise to God, with the sensuality that has not desire to renounce for God, with the ignorance that has not vision to attain to God, with the mechanical deadness of custom that has no initiative to seek for God, He sought to stand as VISION, POWER, DESIRE, INITIATIVE, AND LIVING PURPOSE; symbolizing their sacrifice, their struggle, their renunciation, by HIS CROSS.

‘ And He began to teach that the Son of Man must suffer many things—and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He called unto him the multitude with his disciples and said unto them, If any man would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’¹

The Ideal formulated in the synagogue of Nazareth has not changed. Nor has loyalty to His purpose. The Anointed has come to guide, to illuminate, to set free. The way is harder, the darkness denser, the bands more binding that He at first had seen. Therefore will He be THE WAY, THE LIGHT, THE LIVING FREEDOM. Therefore will He stand within men’s hearts as singleness of purpose.

‘ If any man would come after me—the Way of the Cross—let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospels, shall save it.’²

¹ *St. Mark* viii, 31.

² *Ibid.* 34-5.

Thus did the Christ set out to seek the perfection of human selfhood by the path of the Cross. Thus did He strive to be the Great Awakener of the souls of men.

We may well hold our breath in awe at the tremendousness of His faith in His purpose. He believed with His whole being in man's capacity for God, and in the great spiritual freedom to which vision, singleness of mind, would lead. He identified Himself so thoroughly with man that He renounced all, trusting to their power of memory, their power of love, their power to pierce through sense to spirit. And this, though the Pharisees were plotting with one of His own disciples to seize Him; though the crowd having acclaimed Him Messiah and King, in a revulsion of feeling, seeing Him unwilling to assert Himself, was about to assist in His destruction; though the eleven were about to forsake Him and flee. The Christ foresaw all this. And yet it was upon the possibility of the spiritual in the human heart—in just such hearts as these—He based His faith.

Nevertheless though the Infinite in the human heart was His Ideal, and to awaken it the purpose for which He was prepared to renounce life itself, the finite was actual enough to torture Him, and to lead to the trial of His faith. The scene in Gethsemane can be interpreted only thus. The faithlessness of disciple, the hatred of ruler, the blind unreasoning opposition that sways a crowd—to see the Infinite in THESE, to rest His Hope on THESE,—in truth THE CUP was hard to drink.

5. DIVINE LOVE SEEKING

A Divine Grace seeking ; The Great Awakener of the souls of men ;—the scene that depicts the climax of His search is a human hell where God can hardly enter.

He has faced falsehood, injustice, the exquisite cruelty of mockery, the cowardice and faithlessness of the disciples. The cries of the mob, urging on His destruction, ring in His ears. Men use His very acts of love and mercy with which to taunt Him. Even the thieves who are His fellow-sufferers revile Him.

At first He pleads for men. The terrible blindness of their hearts can but awaken only the deeper mercy of Him whom He sought to reveal to them. ' Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Then the forces with which He had battled in Gethsemane array themselves again against Him with overpowering strength.

Is the Eternal Selfhood which He sought to awaken in men, not only sleeping, but dead ? He had thought that when ' lifted up ' He would draw all hearts to Him ; that He would stir response in their greater feeling, their gratitude, their understanding. Has He identified Himself then with this infinite of selfhood, this greater humanity, only to find it dead ? Injustice *might* have awakened in some an assertion of the right ; an adherence to the cause of Christ and Truth. Cruelty *might* have given someone courage to side with Him, even though such partisanship brought death.

‘ And this is life eternal that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ.’¹ Not only temporarily blind then ! Not only sleeping ! But incapable of sight, sleeping the sleep of death ! Life eternal is ‘ to know ’, but they do not know. The Cross should have taught them. All that was best in their humanity should have found expression when opposed to that manifestation of the worst passions that sway the finite self. Later it did speak. In the end man found his eternal selfhood. But not in time to save the Christ His cry—‘ My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ’ He entered the human hell where God was not.—That howling mob—And He had hoped to find stirrings of ‘ knowledge,’ the ‘ Life Eternal ’ ! Yet even in His deepest agony He clung to men. Their need was His need ; and He, one with THEIR failure. The God He sought for them, in them, He could not find. His purpose, His ideal, HIS GOD, seemed far away. ‘ Forsaken me.’ This, the climax of His search, the climax of the failure of His search, was the climax too of LOVE.

¹ *St. John*, xvii, 3.

CHAPTER V

REALIZATION IS REVELATION

1. GOD REVEALED IN THE DEPTH OF PERSONALITY

THE great contribution that the Rṣis made to religious thought lay in the truth that only in the depths of his own selfhood can a man know God. It was in the search of this depth that the Yōgi extirpated all superficial aspects of self and found 'isolation.' It was in the search of this depth that Śaṅkara counted self to be 'illusion.'

We must now see that it was nothing less than the same truth, that Christ Himself had in view. He too sought to unfold from the depths of human selfhood the realization of God. It was apprehension of the Divine in personal experience ; it was vision, inwardness, spiritual attainment, that He sought for His hearers. The very failure of His life was due to His dissatisfaction with anything less than this goal. Men would have accepted Him had He let them make Him King. They would have served Him had He used His power for worldly ends. What the Pharisees would not accept was His higher standard of righteousness and of love. What the disciples would not accept was the idea that greatness consisted in service and not in temporal rule. What the common people would not accept was that He should remain a

wandering Teacher, when they were ready to make Him King. Because He tried to bring men God in spiritual vision, in patient faith, in humble service, they crucified Him. They would have been satisfied with the ideal of the God-king upon His throne. He was not satisfied with less than the ideal of the 'Suffering Servant'—God within, realized in the depths of selfhood. 'I in them,' He prayed 'and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one.' 'O Righteous Father, the world knew thee not but I knew thee; and these knew that thou didst send me; and I made known unto them thy name and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them.' ¹

2. CHRIST'S METHOD OF DEEPENING SELFHOOD.

HIS TEACHING

Let us follow more in detail Christ's way of leading man towards attainment; and His effort to quicken in the souls of men the concreteness of the 'Love' of God He Himself experienced. He set out, as we have said with the deliberate purpose of deepening capacity for, and quickening realization of, what He counted the Divine to mean.

Taking the most superficial aspect of His method, His teaching, we find that its primary aim was the self-realization of truth. The principle of veiling truth within a parable or question, of calling forth the co-operation of will to make it understood, causes growth to spring from the central core of man's own selfhood; and makes self-initiative the driving power

¹ *St. John* xvii, 23-6.

of the spirit. 'He that hath ears to hear let him hear.' 'That hearing they should hear and not understand.' 'And the disciples came and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? And He answered and said unto them. Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables, because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear.'¹ In the prison John's faith is weakening, and he sends two disciples to ask, 'Art thou he that cometh or look we for another?' Jesus does not answer directly but allows the two disciples to see Him at work teaching and healing: then He says, 'Go tell John the things which ye do see and hear—And blessed is he'—whose faith shall not be weakened—'who shall find none occasion of stumbling in me.' He leaves John to work out the conclusion for himself.²

When He wished to teach His disciples the meaning of His Messiahship, He drew from them by questioning, the point He wanted to bring home to them. 'Who say ye that I am?'

When His enemies questioned His authority to preach and teach and He tried to make them acknowledge the Divine origin of all spiritual truth, and

¹ *St. Matt.* xiii, 9-16.

² *St. Matt.* xi, 2-7.

hence the witness that His teaching brought of His Divine authority, He answered their question with another. 'Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?' They refused to admit, even while they were afraid to deny, the heavenly origin of John's teaching. Christ had appealed to the best they already knew and in their hatred of Him they spurned even that; lest—as He meant to do, and as they knew He meant to do—He would make that best bear witness to Himself. So He definitely refused to answer the question they had asked. He warned them instead, through a parable, of the destruction that would surely be theirs by this deliberate rejection of what they knew to be truth.¹

Was it not Froebel who said, God Himself cannot give a man individuality? Nothing can give it to him but self-activity. The Christ long before had, in the development of the spiritual, worked upon the same basis. God Himself cannot make a man see truth. Only from within, from the response of the self, can the spiritual man grow.

3. HIS METHOD. BY EXAMPLE

So again by example rather than by formula, by suggestion rather than by command, was the same method revealed. There was no forcing growth. Spirit must grow from within, and must be the expression of the innate desire and life. 'And when he was praying His disciples came unto Him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray."' Here is an illustration of

¹ *St. Luke* xx, 1-18.

the triumph of teaching by example ; and of the learner growing to desire what Christ Himself experienced. The lonely figure upon the mountain tops spending the night in prayer had made communion with the Unseen a living relationship, and a living value for those who watched and waited. Christ drew them within the experience of the living. Their experience then became a quickening, and with it a formulation of the desire, ' Lord, teach us to pray.'

3. HIS METHOD. BY SEEKING CO-OPERATION OF WILL

Christ's goal was to quicken capacity for the spiritual within man's desire and will ; that is to say, within the very core of personality. Without the co-operation of self He confessed Himself utterly unable to help, or to create ideals. ' And there He could do no mighty work.' ' Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches, to enter into the Kingdom of God.' The life must stir from within. The spirit must cling to His strong Spirit,—yea, with a hold, as microscopic, as the hold of a grain of mustard seed upon its food substance ; otherwise no cure, no help, no growth is possible. Faith is the one condition of benefit. That is to say, the spirit with its powers must grow from within.

4. THE CROSS AS ILLUSTRATING CHRIST'S METHOD

It was still in accordance with Christ's aim that He chose the way of the Cross ; and pre-conceived the emotional force with which it would revolutionize

men's minds. 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him—may have eternal life.' Christ had been telling Nicodemus¹ that heavenly thoughts were beyond him, that he scarcely understood earthly things. And this seemed to be a generalization for the race. 'No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven.' How then could man attain the spiritual unassisted? Yet how could the figure of the Cross assist him?

Through the way of the Cross how could man ascend to heaven?

Jesus Christ was gazing into the very depths of man's heart. He saw the great potentiality of man's feeling, and counted emotion as the sharp instrument that would cut out personality into a perfect form. God's love of the world would become in man a subjective dynamic; for man would learn to love the 'Gift of God', (the Crucified) and in loving, would attain eternal life.

5. CHRIST'S METHOD TRIUMPHANT WITH THE RESURRECTION VISION

Had Christ not deepened capacity in His disciples first, had He not quickened in them a love and a loyalty that—in spite of the cowardice displayed at the crucifixion—was strong and true; there could have been no realization of His spiritual triumph, His Divine Reality, His Risen Life. In the end, His

¹ *St. John* iii, 1-18.

influence and His teaching, His power and His greatness triumphed. His spiritual worth, the worth of the Ideal He had sought for them, and His Divine Personality, were at last manifest to them. They saw Him as He was, with a vision clearer, more unerring than the eyes of sense had defined. Dead? Nay, till now they had never really seen Him, had never grasped the fulness of His Presence!

Calvary, and Christ's despairing cry were not the end. On the third day He rose again from the dead, and 'appeared to Peter; then to the twelve; then He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once; then He appeared to James; then to all the apostles, and last of all, as unto one born out of due time' to Paul, the writer.¹

They were not very many out of all who had heard Him teach; out of all the multitudes whom He had healed and fed. Why were there not more? Was it not because His own law of the spiritual life was being fulfilled?

'Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.' There was no experience of a Risen Christ to those who had hated Him. Why should one see and not another? Why did He not appear to the Pharisee (as He did afterwards appear to Saul) and make him learn his mistake? We shall see later that in Saul's mind the question was arising whether, after all, the martyr

¹ *I Corinthians* xv, 4-9.

Stephen¹—whose dying vision of His Master revealed a beauty and faith Saul himself had never experienced,—had found a spiritual Reality which his murderer had never fathomed. And because his spiritual vision was opening up, because capacity to understand was being formed, Saul too saw the Risen Christ. But in the case of the Pharisee, the very quality of blindness which led him to crucify Christ, prevented him from realizing Christ's spiritual Reality.

6. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESURRECTION VISION

We blunder if we miss the significance of the new quality of comprehension involved in the Resurrection Vision. This is the supreme triumph of Christ's Life and work. His aim is realized. Inward capacity for apprehending Divine values has been attained, and has made possible the experience described as Union with the Risen Christ.

It is not credulity that makes Christians hold to the belief in miracles. The Christian miracles do not mean that law ceases to function. They mean that laws function upon a level higher than our ordinary experience; that is to say, upon the level of the spiritual. In nature we see one law giving place to another. We see, for example, how life sets aside laws that govern insensible forms. If we focus upon the lower and slur over the new dynamic of life—itsself obedient to other laws—we might make the induction

¹ *Acts* vii.

that in this relationship to the lower, life is a miracle. But in this case 'miracle' only defines the higher series of laws.

Spirit is to life what life is to senseless forms. It introduces new laws, new forces, new realities. To many the spiritual is an unknown region, yet to those who experience it, it has a reality to which, in comparison, sense-experience is a passing shadow. Philosophy both in the West and in the East bears testimony to this truth. What then the ignorant call a miracle, may be found to belong to a sequence of higher order.

It is such a sequence that makes the Christian hold to the belief in the Resurrection. The disciples stand before the world self-revealed as cowardly, office-seeking men, ready to misinterpret the lofty spirituality of their Master, ready to forsake Him and flee because their worldly hopes were not realized. And in spite of the utter humiliation of the Cross, and the position of contempt in which they themselves were placed—a position too of danger—in an incredibly short period of time they again appear before the public, manifesting forth the Spirit, the Vision, the Power of their Master. They themselves interpret the transformation of their own souls as the result of the re-manifestation of the Crucified. He had appeared to them, quickening their vision, opening their understanding, interpreting to them the purpose of His suffering, sending them forth to carry on His Work.

As character does not change without a cause, and as their character and subsequent sufferings in His

service brought evidence of a real transformation, Christians are ready to accept the reason offered for the change, and believe that they did see the Risen Christ.

And in this, Christians are—perhaps unconsciously—clinging to the law of the spiritual life that should not be lost sight of. They are rightly emphasizing, in spite of the miracle involved, the objective fact of the Resurrection. There are some who might judge that because the Resurrection is (as we have seen above) the spiritual subjective attainment that Christ sought for in man, and laid down His life to achieve for man, that the disciples came by this ‘naturally’ i.e. through the ‘Resurrection’—shall we say?—in their minds of the dead Christ’s words and influence.

I think we must avoid this conclusion. To hold it means that the Spirit manifested by Christ’s human body was destroyed with His body. It seems an impossible thought. Is there then no eternal value in Love, in Service, in Sacrifice, in the Vision of God, in the Ideal for man, such as He revealed? Do hatred and cruelty, envy and force, rule the universe? Is Calvary the climax of the highest that humanity has striven to attain?

No, no, He is risen. Less than that belief crushes under the iron heel of materialism all the spiritual truth, all the spiritual beauty for which the soul craves.

As He transcended the narrow sacerdotalism of the Pharisee, the shallow cowardice of the ruler, the worldly ambitions of his followers, so He transcended

all human failure, and the forces that make for destruction in humanity ; and so He transcended death itself.

And as thus transcendent, the disciples,—humiliated, despairing, with His last teaching burning in their memories, with the meaning of the Sacrament of His Body and Blood now made plain¹—saw Him once again.

On the level of our lower experience a resurrection from the dead is contrary to the laws of the known. On that level too a physical re-appearance could have little influence in transforming conduct. The mere miracle—the wonder inspired at the unknown—is not the basis of Christian belief. What is the basic cause for belief is Christ ;—in the eternal quality, the transcendent beauty He revealed ; and the witness of this quality brought by those, who at last learnt to see Him as He was.

¹ *St. Luke* xxii, 14-21.

CHAPTER VI

CHRIST AS FULFILLING THE IDEAL OF THE RĪSIS

1. THE NEED FOR A DEFINITION OF GOD AS DIVINE PERSONALITY

It was asked above, How can we define as Unity the different aspects of what India's search for the spiritual has achieved? The Yōgi represents an intellectual achievement. The Buddha represents a practical achievement. The Bhakta represents a devotional achievement. Is God then a Unity binding this diversity of attainment into a whole? Is God then Reality for thought, and at the same time Reality for will and feeling? Yet if He be all-embracing, He must be more than India's attainment in any one direction has acknowledged Him to be.

2. THE COMING OF CHRIST BROUGHT A DEEPENING OF HUMAN PERSONALITY

Not only has India failed to realize God in His completeness, but she has failed to realize within self a perfect unity. The tendency has been to obliterate one or other of the attributes of self, rather than unify them; to lose individuality, rather than develop it. The Yōgi obliterated feeling and will to achieve a great incomprehensible Abstraction. The

Bhakta, carried away by the flood of feeling, has often obliterated reason and moral expediency. What has been said of the ancient world in the West could be likewise said of India.—‘There is no adequate sense, either in theory or practice, of human personality as such. This may be seen—by looking at two of its obvious characteristics. Personality, as we understand it, is universal in its extension or scope—that is, it must pertain to every human being as such, making him man; and it is one in its intention or meaning,—that is, it is the unifying principle, or to use a more guarded expression, the name of a unity in which all a man’s attributes and functions meet, making him an individual self. And on both these points the theory and practice of the ancient world was deficient.’ Having illustrated his point from Greek philosophy the writer continues, ‘As a rule it is beyond dispute that neither the universality nor the unity of human personality, its two most obviously essential features, were adequately understood in pre-Christian ages.—But the advent of Christianity created a new epoch both in the development and recognition of human personality. Its Founder lived a life and exercised a personal attraction, but is expressly reported to have told His followers that the full meaning of that life and its attraction would not be understood till He was gone. “When He the Spirit of Truth is come—He shall glorify me for He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you. He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.” The fact of the

unique life came first, the new Personality ; and then the gradual explanation of the fact, in the doctrine of the Person of Christ.—In the same way the early Christians began by feeling a new life within them, due as they believed, to their being in spiritual contact with the living Person of their Lord ; and enabling them to say, ‘ I live, yet not I, Christ liveth in me.’ ‘ Let us therefore do all things as becomes those who have God dwelling in them.’ Then they went on, according to their capacity and the necessities of the time, to give a reason for the hope that was in them.’¹

3. THE VISION OF THE R̥SIS AS ANTICIPATING SUCH AN EXPERIENCE

The new meaning which the coming of Christ gave to human Personality, as well as the new interpretation that the experience of Christ enabled men to give to God can be shown to fulfil what was originally the purpose of India’s search. This purpose was the realization of God as the great Unity and Depth of selfhood. The R̥sis taught (and the roots of all the metaphysical and religious systems in India lie in the teaching of the R̥sis) that God can be found only within. ‘ The wise who by means of meditation on his self recognizes the Ancient,—who is difficult to be seen, who has entered into the dark, who is hidden in the cave, who dwells in the abyss,— as God, he indeed leaves joy and sorrow far behind.’²

¹ Illingworth, *Personality, Human and Divine*. Chap. I.

² *Kāṭha Up.* 1, Ad. 2, Valli. 12.

But the R̥sis themselves admit that within is but darkness, and a great unknown abyss. Scarcely can 'sharp and subtle intellect' discern the Reality sought for. The Vedas, the Sacred Scriptures, cannot reveal Him. Nor can He be 'gained by understanding, nor by much learning.' In the end it is the great Self-giving of the Ātman, His own gift and choice, by which He can be known.

The Christ fulfils in every detail this Vision and Hope of the R̥sis. He came to unify man's selfhood and create of it the abiding place of the Spirit—the Ātman. He came as the free gift and Self-giving of Brahman, as God choosing to Himself, man. No understanding can say why; nor can much learning pierce through to the mystery of that gift. Only faith accepts Him, knowing that in His abiding within the self He justifies His Revelation. 'The wise who perceive Him within their self, to them belongs eternal peace, not to others. They perceive the highest indescribable pleasure, saying "This is That". How then can I understand it? Has it its own light, or does it reflect light? The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor these lightnings, and much less this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him; by his light all this is lighted.'¹

The R̥sis depicted the Ideal. They saw too, how hard it was to realize it by merely human striving. They saw that perfect realization was possible only by the 'grace of the Creator': and by His Presence.

¹ *Kātha Up.* 5, Valli. 13-15.

They would appear to say, 'man's personality in its fulness is found only in God ; and He who reveals to man his depth, reveals to him God.'

3. THE 'CHRIST OF HISTORY' AND THE
'CHRIST OF EXPERIENCE'

India has not rightly understood the significance of Christ, and the light He throws upon the Ideal depicted by her ancient religious teachers. This Ideal and its realization in Christ through deepening Personality can very well form the angle of approach to New Testament study.

The modern critic of the New Testament makes a very significant distinction between the various attitudes taken in depicting Christ, found in the books of the New Testament. Making a rough summary of the books sufficient for our purpose, these comprise, the Synoptics (or the first three Gospels), the Acts of the Apostles and the earlier epistles of St. Paul—Galatians, Thessalonians, Corinthians, Romans ; the later epistles—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and the Gospel and Epistles of St. John.

The critic has found in the Synoptics reference to Christ as to an objective historical Person, while in the writings of St. Paul and St. John reference is made as to the dynamic of the subjective life, the 'Christ of Experience.' The purpose the critic has in view in making this analysis, is to prove that the historical Christ divested of the adoration that led His followers to see in Him the Divine, is merely a human Teacher.

Without coming to this conclusion it is still possible to treat the critic's analysis of the distinction between the 'Christ of History', and the 'Christ of Experience' as helpful in understanding the New Testament writings. For this analysis gives us just what we are now in search of, namely the contrast between the Revelation that came to man's depth of consciousness, and the historical Figure, its dynamic cause.

Would the Revelation have been complete without the depth of experience in consciousness? Given the Teacher depicted in the Gospels,—the 'fact of the unique Life',—is there not implicitly present in the fact the need for explanation?—'They perceive that highest indescribable pleasure saying, "This is that". How then can I understand it?'—What is actually the case, though the critic fails to see it, the 'Christ of Experience' does not add to, but only tries to bring out what is already present in the 'Christ of History'. St. Paul and St. John only make explicit what is implicit in the Synoptics. The Ideal, and the emotion quickened by the Ideal, brought through subjective analysis and subjective realization, a new depth and unity to personality, and a new interpretation of God. This indeed a critical study of the Epistles and St. John discloses. But is not this just the wonder and the triumph of the 'Christ of History'? Is not this the one great evidence of His Divinity—that in experiencing Him Personality attained a new standard, and men found God? The R̥ṣis would teach us that not otherwise can God be found. The Historical Christ could only become the

Christ of Experience. 'The Ideal, The Reality that is Spiritual, could only be found in subjective consciousness.

4. THE HISTORICAL CHRIST DEPICTED AS A SPIRITUAL POWER QUICKENING PERSONALITY AND EVOKING THE DEMAND FOR INTERPRETATION

The Historical Christ of the Synoptics 'is already awakening questioning ; is already stirring in men's hearts the emotion of the Ideal. If we take any one of these Gospels and read it as a whole we shall find this implicit in the very description of the Presence, in the kind of Personality there portrayed. In St. Paul's philosophy this questioning is carried to its necessary conclusion. In St. John's mysticism is the Ideal interpreted. But the impression that St. Mark's Gospel gives is not that Christ was merely a human Teacher. It is rather that the uniqueness of His teaching, and the marvel of His Person led friends, enemies, and disciples each and all to account for His uniqueness in their own way.

' And they were astonished at his teaching ; for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes.'

' And they were all amazed, in so much that they questioned among themselves saying, What is this ? a new teaching ? with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him ! And the report of him went out straightway everywhere into all the region of Galilee round about.'

‘—they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.’

‘And the multitude cometh together again, so that he could not so much as eat bread. And when his friends heard it they went out to take hold on him, for they said, He is beside himself.’

‘And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.’

‘And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this ? that even the wind and the sea obey him ?’

‘And they were amazed straightway with a great amazement.’

‘And King Herod heard thereof ; for his name had become known. And he said, John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore do these powers work in him. But others said, It is a prophet, even as one of the prophets.’

‘And Jesus went forth and his disciples into the villages of Caesarea Philippi : and in the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Who do men say that I am ? And they told him saying, John the Baptist, and others Elijah ; but others, one of the prophets. And he asked them, But who say ye that I am ? Peter answered and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.’

The question that presented itself to all these, and that each answered according to his depth of spiritual penetration, St. Paul too and St. John tried to answer. But in answering they added nothing to the beauty and holiness of the Figure of St. Mark. In St. Paul

and St. John there is the Spiritual Presence awaiting explanation. But in St. Mark too and the Synoptics, there is this Presence. This it was that impelled the fishermen and the tax-gatherer to set forth at His call to become the spiritual teachers of mankind. This it was that in conflict with religious orthodoxy made Him hated of the religious leaders. This it was that pierced the consciousness of demoniacs and restored their sanity. This it was that quickened in leper and in corpse a new life. This it was that made the sinners whole.¹ In St. Mark ² no less than in St. John does the experience which came into men's lives demand—yes—and receive Divine explanation. In St. Mark, no less than in St. Paul, is His influence a permeating power revolutionizing human personality.

¹ See *St. Mark*, Chapters v-viii for above references and quotations.

² It is generally accepted to-day, that St. Mark was the interpreter of Peter, and wrote down what Peter taught. It adds considerable historical value to the Gospel to know that the events described are the report of an eye-witness, and that that eye-witness was plain-spoken Peter.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHRIST OF EXPERIENCE

1. ST. PAUL'S REALIZATION OF CHRIST

THE most remarkable point in anti-Christian arguments is the absence of ideas wide enough to cover the given data. St. Paul's conversion is a case in point. In trying to explain it away it has been attributed to a swoon or to an epileptic seizure; although side by side with such an explanation it is not uncommon to find that Christianity (and as a natural sequence its influence in the history of the world) has been hinged upon his philosophy.

St. Paul's writings as a world-power hang upon a psychical fact, and bring psychical evidence in themselves.

The great Apostle was acquainted with the tradition of the life and teaching of Jesus, yet before conversion the knowledge aroused but 'threatenings and slaughter.' What then transformed his whole character, and revolutionized his thought? What stirred in him the emotion of the Ideal? What awakened in him the consciousness of a Personality, perfect, beautiful, irradiant with the Divine?

It was nothing less than the Spirit of the Crucified that (it must be) Saul had seen reflected upon the face of the dying Stephen.

And Stephen 'being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God,

and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.' ¹

Here was the triumph of the Risen Christ, plain to see. Here was the very echo of the Master's voice, praying, as He too had prayed for those who had murdered Him. Did not this triumph elude the murderers' stones? When the brutal work was over, would it not cling—and haunt—until it would find expression in troubled consciousness; and shine as a blinding light across Saul's path? ²

'And as he journeyed—suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.'

This realization of the Christ Ideal which came at last to Saul was of a Power, a Reality, a Personality

¹ *Acts* vii, 55-60.

² *Ibid.* ix. 3-5.

enwrapping human personality, a Presence, a living triumph of the Spirit over death. The key-note of Saul's life subsequent to this realization was absolute self-renunciation to the triumphant Christ. The key-note of his philosophy was the fact involved—the Spiritual Presence—the Presence—what does He mean who overshadows form and time, casting an irradiance upon the human spirit; a holiness within desire; who holds man's heart in absolute thralldom?

2. ST. PAUL'S EXPERIENCE IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE NEEDS OF MEN

The Spiritual Presence is a real Unity in St. Paul's philosophy. It is true, critics have found what appears to be an evolution in his doctrine; but this can be accounted for by the different aspects his message takes as he adapts it to the varying needs of the people amongst whom he worked. The conditions of Judaism, and of a wider humanity—the Gentile world—involve divergent attitudes of approach. So again when as lonely thinker in the prison at Rome he sought to find a reason for the Fact of Christ, the setting of his thought diverges again sufficiently to account for the fuller aspect his message takes.

3. THE NEEDS OF MEN :—(1) BOUND BY THE EXTERNALS OF RELIGION

We can read in St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians how the Apostle interpreted his experience as a great **Freedom**. The narrow restrictions of Judaism can be taken to illustrate the conventions and external

observances that men build up around themselves, and which take the place of spiritual vitality. St. Paul condemns all such as bondage, which the coming of Christ abolishes. 'We also were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world: but when the fulness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bond-servant but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.' ¹

The new freedom to which as heir of God man is called, reaches to the very core of his personality. Laws and conventions had been ordained to curb man's evil propensities. Now with the coming of the Spirit, evil is not merely curbed but uprooted. In contrast with the lusts of the flesh, with idolatries, 'sorceries, enmities, divisions, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like', the 'fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance': and 'against such there is no law.' With the coming of Christ Jesus into the heart the flesh with the passions and lusts thereof is 'crucified.' ² But this death works the wonder of life in God. 'I have been crucified with Christ', cries St. Paul, 'yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith

¹ *Gal.* iv, 4-7.

² *Ibid.* v, 19-24

which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.' ¹

4. THE NEEDS OF MEN :—(2) BOUND BY SIN

In the Epistle to the Romans St. Paul follows up the problem of human need in relation to wider humanity. He strongly condemns the lack of understanding which makes man blind to the Spiritual Reality, manifest everywhere in the visible world. This blindness to God results in positive evil, in superstition and in idolatry.

'And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting ; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God—who knowing the ordinance of God that they which practise such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but also consent with them that practise them.'²

Sin is a reality. Men have yielded their members servants to uncleanness, to iniquity unto iniquity ; yet—here is the cardinal triumph of the experience St. Paul brings to them—'being made free from sin and becoming servants to God,' they have 'fruit unto holiness.'

What is the new condition that works the transformation ? Is it in accordance with natural law that the

¹ *Gal.* ii, 19-23.

² *Romans* i, 20, 28 and 32.

sensualist can become spiritually minded? That the fool can become a sage? Does causation cease to rule in human thought? Not so, asserts the Apostle. What the laws of sensuality and folly cannot do from the inherent nature of sensuality and folly, the spiritual can do. Consciousness of the Ideal must be awakened. The mind must mirror and act upon spiritual guidance. 'Walking after the Spirit' in the 'law of the Spirit' the individual must gain freedom from the law of sin and death. But this can only come through individual and personal realization. Men must see, must learn the condemnation of their sin, of their blindness. The realization of the crucifixion of the flesh must be brought home to them in burning figures of thought.

Response to the Ideal is everything. Righteousness, Virtue, Wisdom seen in the likeness of the flesh, and as an offering for sin, must quicken a spiritual Resurrection. The darkness that sin brings (Death) in this way will pass. No argument more sound, to-day, could be advanced for the growth and unification of the selfhood. Translated into modern language, what St. Paul means is this. If sensuality gets a grip on the self, what power in heaven or on earth can set it free? No power—unless the emotion of the Ideal is awakened. Unless somehow self is visualized in contrast with a higher. Then, with the Ideal comes the anguish of remorse, and this anguish brings salvation. It brings striving after the Ideal and a higher life.

And so with Jesus Christ. In holding before us the Ideal of His Love and Suffering we contrast self with

a Higher. Then making Him the motive, and dynamic force of a striving after this higher, we make self die : and in so doing we attain His Risen Life. ' If we become united with Christ by the likeness of His Death, we shall be also by the likeness of His Resurrection. Knowing this that our old man was crucified with Him that the body of sin might be done away. For the death he died, He died unto sin once, but the Life that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.'¹

This then was what St. Paul meant by the experience of Christ. In addition to appreciating and reproducing in himself the Divine beauty of Christ, he came to see more and more clearly the psychological laws involved in appreciation and reproduction. He came to see that the experience might be made the possession of all mankind. In other words, he showed that the Divine quality of spirit is not man's natural heritage, but is a very individual development attained by the self, through centralizing emotion, will, and thought in the Ideal.

5. ST. PAUL'S INTERPRETATION OF THE EXPERIENCE

The development of St. Paul's thought can not be called the development of dogma ; (as it is often judged to be), much less a metaphysical fabrication. It of course alters the form of his teaching that the

¹ *Romans* vi, 5-11.

Spiritual Presence no longer remains the possession of his own individual experience, or of his nation's experience, but is regarded as the heritage of all mankind. But this seems as it should be, given man's need and striving, given his ignorance and his lust. If there is in very fact a way to freedom, if there has come into time an Ideal of ONE WHO LOVED MEN TO THE EXTENT OF DEATH: WHO SOUGHT THE GREATEST FROM MEN BY QUICKENING IN THEM THROUGH HIS OWN SELF-GIVING THE DESIRE TO GIVE: is not emancipation of sensual desire within such an Ideal a spiritual gem that belongs to humanity as a whole? Nay, is not the fact involved wider than even humanity itself? Does it not become a problem of all being and becoming?

Thus did the question present itself to Paul in the prison in Rome during his latter years. First had come the experience of Christ as Power, Personality, Grace, Irradiance, Love surpassing the holiest passion that spirit has ever attained. Then had come Paul's effort to make men participate in his experience. Last of all came the interpretation of his experience in its widest significance.

Looking back on all that the Spiritual Presence had meant to him; and to the men he had saved from the narrow sectarianism of Judaism; and to those also whom he had saved from the grossest sensuality; he came to the conclusion that the Grace which had unfolded the great depth of Personality he himself and those whom he had taught had found, could only be Divine.

The conclusion had been present all along in the complete response he had made, and taught others to make, to the Risen Christ. But now when as a lonely prisoner activity gives place to meditation, the meaning of the experience that had come to revolutionize human life, becomes uppermost in his mind.

‘And you did he quicken,’ he writes to the Ephesians, ‘when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein afore time ye walked according to the course of this world,—doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature the children of wrath, even as the rest :—but God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved) and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus : that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus : for by grace have ye been saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God.—

‘So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone ; in whom each several building fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord ; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.’ ¹

¹ *Eph.* ii, 1 to end.

This gift of renewed personality, this 'Grace' of an Indwelling Saviour, is not less than a 'holy temple' for the Lord, a 'habitation of God in the Spirit.'

The vision of the R \ddot{s} is has in a richer, fuller way found expression in St. Paul. Man has learnt 'the majesty of the Self through the grace of the Creator': he has 'perceived the highest indescribable pleasure' and has learnt that it is God.

'This is That.' 'That'—as Paul defines Him, as the Risen Christ reveals Him, is a great richness of mercy, a Love 'the breadth, and length, and height and depth' of which 'passeth knowledge.'¹ Even 'before the foundation of the world' His purpose in creating us was that 'we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love: having ordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ—'² through whom His grace was freely bestowed upon us.

The experience of spiritual freedom that Paul had preached to the Galatians; the experience of dying with Christ in order to realize in Him a Risen Life, that he had preached to the Romans, takes man into the very heart and purpose of God.

'This is That.' The Spiritual Presence is no less than 'the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation: for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers: all things have been created

¹ *Eph.* iii, 17-19.

Ibid. i, 4-11.

through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist.'¹

6. ST. PAUL'S INTERPRETATION DOES NOT
ADD TO THE REALITY OF THE PRESENCE
IN THE GOSPELS

It remains to ask, how far is St. Paul's experience of the Spiritual Presence a unity with the experiences formulated in the 'historical' records?

St. Paul is defining Christ in His relationship to human Personality. He shows Him to be the Ideal that alone can purify, unify, quicken, regenerate sinful Personality. But this indeed is the Christ of the Gospels, represented in His relationship to human personality. His permeating and quickening Power is expressed in all the miracles. Whether these be accepted literally, or as imagery of the spiritual fact, the Presence is one:—the Ideal, commanding adoration, creating faculty, creating purity, creating standards of life and of value that human history had not before achieved.

In the Gospels we see the Christ and the man whose name was 'Legion' sitting at His feet. We see a woman bathing His feet with her tears and wiping them with the hairs of her head. We see the fishermen drawn from the routine of the commonplace setting forth on an adventure which revolutionized the world. We see the power of the Presence inspiring a thief and a rogue to restore four-fold to

¹ *Colossians* i, 14-17.

those whom he had wronged. We see the multitudes of sick 'holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with devils, and epileptic and palsied' drawing from this Fount of healing 'Virtue.'

And as such a Power, such a Reality, such a Personality enwrapping human Personality, we see again the Spiritual Presence as He stood in the vision of St. Paul.

But so again is the nature of the quickening bond that St. Paul defined as LOVE, implied in the facts presented in the Gospel narrative.

What was that root emotion manifested as 'Faith' which was the condition of the renewing Life? Surely not less than a gripping of the roots of being to the 'Love which passeth knowledge': a stirring of the life, by a new soil and nourishment for life. This was the bond that gripped the harlot, the thief, the mad-man: —the 'breadth, and length, and height, and depth', of the 'Love of Christ' experienced: the 'fulness of God' made known.¹

¹ *Eph.* iii, 14 20.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EMOTION OF THE IDEAL

1. SPIRITUAL APPREHENSION

WE have seen that Faith in Christ rests upon more than belief in the miraculous as such. Criticism can be, and has been directed against such an aspect of belief ; but Faith possesses an outlook that criticism cannot touch.

Faith is a realization of the spiritual. It is an appreciation of values that are Divine :—Beauty, Goodness, Truth, Love. It is craving for God finding satisfaction only in Him. And it is the spiritual that Christ brings to Faith. He brings to it values that are Divine. He quickens in it consciousness of the Presence of God. Even though it were possible to imagine an extreme case, of criticism actually proving that the Christ of History was stripped of the miraculous ; nevertheless the Ideal that remains is a Divine Standard, a Spiritual Value, that demands from man allegiance ; that claims from him appreciation.

Christ's appeal then is to man's greater depth. He speaks the language of the spiritual, and trusts to the spiritual in man to make response.

'He that hath ears to hear,' let him hear. He counted His work incomplete until in each individual

consciousness 'The Spirit,' should dwell ; declaring Him anew, revealing Him as the manifestation of the Father.¹

And we have seen that in revealing God within the depths of personality, Christ brings completion to the Rsis' vision, and a goal to India's search. Thus, the significance for India of St. Paul's experience of the Risen Christ is, that that experience was God-realization, the gift of His grace, the fulness of His Love, the Sonship purposed by God before the world began.

It remains for us now to see how St. John's response to Christ in the spiritual apprehension of His Person brought an even deeper realization of the Divine.

2. THE POWER OF THE IDEAL IN RE-CREATING PERSONALITY

In the Spiritual Realization of the Life of Christ, and the beauty and uniqueness of His Personality, we have a sublime illustration of the response of human personality to an Ideal ; and of the laws which obtain in the growth of personality. Vision, the inrush of emotion, the quickening of the will, tend to reproduce in character the type of the Ideal. The emotion of the Ideal is a perfect instrument to carve the self upon the lines of another self. We see it every day in conscious and unconscious imitation of those whom we admire and love. We often see it too having

¹ *John* xvi, 7-15.

fatal results, when the ideal loved or admired is not the highest.

The Christ could have chosen no more perfect witness to His Life and Work than this law of personality in its devotion to an Ideal ; which devotion reproduces in very being and life the quality and nature of the Beloved. When advancing criticisms of St. John this evidence is overlooked. Cannot the most passionate devotion to the Beloved, the most intense consciousness of unity with the quickening Power—Love—Life—reproduce most fully the Ideal's fact ?

But, it has been objected, in the spiritual experience of St. John there are elements foreign to the Ideal as formulated in the Synoptics. There are metaphysical elements borrowed from Greek philosophy, there are strange terms that can be traced to Egyptian and other influences.

Admitting all this, allowing also a later date for the Gospel which the appropriation of later contemporary literature would suggest, nevertheless the historical question does not touch the spiritual experience, which is the real witness to Christ in this Gospel.

3. ST. JOHN'S RE-INTERPRETATION OF CHRIST IN THE LIGHT OF HIS EXPERIENCE

St. John brings deep spiritual apprehension to bear on his interpretation of Christ. The style he employs (as Canon Streeter points out) is that of 'Greek literary tradition by which an author puts into the mouths of historical characters speeches of his own composition' ; though in doing so (as the same writer

again shows) the author of St. John's Gospel regarded himself as a prophet inspired by the Spirit of Jesus. He was writing in Ephesus to members of a church educated in Greek schools and on Greek literature. And probably St. Mark's Gospel was already known to them.¹

It is conceivable that as years went on the vision of Christ had become blurred, and the Spiritual Presence had become hidden in the traditional. Converts would accept belief in the events of His life but would miss the first vivid impress of His Person, and the dynamic influence of His permeating power. We can imagine how some such need of revitalizing belief would present itself to one who loved the Master with intense devotion; and how it would lead him to re-interpret from the spiritual aspect, facts already known to his hearers.

It is remarkable that this later Gospel should only re-interpret; that the miraculous, with slight exception should be repetition, and the gaps in St. Mark's Gospel should be filled in. It is also remarkable that in many respects Christ is more divinely human in St. John's Gospel than in any other. We have the festivity at Cana. We have friendship with the little family of Bethany. We have His sorrow at the grave of Lazarus. We have humour when He parries with

¹ Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, Ch. xiii, p. 370. Canon Streeter does not consider the Apostle John to be the author of the Gospel and Epistles, though he counts the first Epistle and the Gospel to be by the same author. This latter point is the one that chiefly concerns the following argument.

the woman at the well. And, was it shame, when He wrote with His finger on the ground? Aim in re-interpretation would surely point to emphasis upon the Living Personality—the Presence—the Beloved—the unique Fact of Christ Himself.

Just as the key-note to St. Paul's philosophy is his consciousness of a Personal Christ who unifies the manifold of the Apostle's outlook; so is such a unity present beneath the terms and thoughts which the Author of the Fourth Gospel has borrowed from contemporary literature;—'Word', 'Shepherd', 'Door', 'Light', 'Life', 'Vine'. These terms no more construct the Christ of St. John than the wonder-making element of a miracle constructs His Divinity in St. Mark.

'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory as of the only-begotten from the Father) full of grace and truth.'¹ It is the infinite impression given to spiritual understanding, of a Man who walked among men; and who by His grace and truth raised men to God. Yes, raised creation itself to the quality of the Life from which it took its origin—to Divine interpretation.

'The Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made.' The Spirit of Jesus defines all being. 'That which hath been made was life in him, and the life was the light of men.'

¹ *John* i, 1, 14.

The 'Word' is a Living Personality, illuminating the darkness of creation and of human life. He it is that crowns the material with life; life with intelligence; and intelligence with spirit. He it is that defines beginning and draws aside the veil from God. The 'Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth.'

And so throughout the Gospel, St. John re-interprets the acts of Christ in their spiritual significance. The account of the act is often present in the Synoptics; its significance is implied. St. John does not create the implication, any more than he created the grace and truth of the Ideal man. He sees in the latter case, that given the Fact of Christ, man, and with him all creation, has a spiritual meaning, and hence a spiritual origin. The significance of Christ was implied in the very Fact. St. John but makes it clear.

In the same way the significance of the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand that Jesus is all-sufficient to satisfy every need and hour, is implied in the story itself. St. John in re-interpreting does not add to the reality. He who takes what man freely offers and uses it to feed the multitudes is truly 'The Bread of Life.' Or the Synoptic miracle of healing the blind:—do we not feel that if there was in very Fact a Personality thus self-defined by action, the definition implicit in the act is only made explicit by St. John in the phrase 'I am the Light of the World'? Or in the phrases, 'I am the Good Shepherd', 'I am the Door,' 'I am the Vine':—St. John but re-interprets the vision already expressed in the Synoptics.

It is there, not in St. John, that we read of the act by which Christ brought to the disciples the conviction that He was the 'Door' to the spiritual fold, and Himself the Shepherd. And through the ages this act possesses spiritual significance as real as St. John's imagery gave it. According to the Synoptics during the Last Supper when Christ and His disciples were gathered together in the upper room, 'As they were eating he took bread, and when he had blessed he brake it and gave it to them, and said, Take ye, this is my Body. And he took a cup and when he had given thanks he gave it to them and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the Covenant which is shed for many.'¹ St. John's spiritual vision is of the wolves prowling around the lonely sheep-fold out on the hills of Palestine. He sees the Shepherd lying in the gap where the door should be, waiting to protect the little flock even with His life. He had called them all by name. They had learnt to know His voice and to follow Him. He had led them out and in, and had given to them a spiritual 'pasture'. But He sought for them more than this. He sought for them that they should never perish, neither should any snatch them out of His hand. So He bound them to Himself in an eternal covenant of Love. He was the DOOR, the SHEPHERD; His Body torn by the wolves, His flowing Blood, bringing them salvation:—'This is my Body': 'This is my Blood.'

¹ *St. Mark* xiv, 22-24.

Yes, the spiritual vision delights in imagery. Such Love is the sap of the new vine of which God is the Husbandman. Love, all-giving Love, is at once the dynamic of growth, and the bond of union. 'Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit in itself except it abide in the vine ; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me.—Even as the Father hath loved me I also have loved you. Abide ye in my love.'¹

4. ST. JOHN'S REALIZATION OF THE DIVINE

So far we have seen that St. John's re-interpretation of Christ adds nothing to the Fact of Christ. St. John's deeper vision but sees the implication already present in the Fact. If indeed men had beheld a 'glory as of the only-begotten of the Father', if indeed men had beheld an Ideal 'full of grace and truth', then there exists a Divine Reality within Humanity, within Time, within Creation, which illuminates all the darkness that has gone before. The Spirit of Jesus is witness to this Reality. The Spirit of Jesus is this Reality.

As the same writer expresses it in the Epistle, 'That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life : (and the Life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto

¹ *St. John* xv, 9.

you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' ¹

The overwhelming experience, seeing, hearing, handling, brought the conviction that the Life manifested was Divine, and fellowship with that Life was fellowship with the Divine. And this conviction is repeated with no uncertain meaning at the conclusion of this Epistle:—

'We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not;—We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.'²

St. John's realization of the Divine is thus a four-fold certainty. (1) Sinlessness is testimony of the Divine. (2) The experience of God forms a striking contrast to the evil of the world. (3) The coming of the Son of God has brought understanding of the true. (4) The true is 'an inward' abiding. If we return to the Gospel we shall see how the experience of Christ has built up for John (as we must continue to call the author of Gospel and Epistle) this conviction.

¹ *I John* i, 1-3.

² *I John* v, 18-20.

5. THE REALIZATION OF THE SINLESSNESS OF CHRIST

In St. Mark's Gospel Christ is depicted as forming a striking contrast to the Pharisees, and the standard of holiness that they had imagined themselves to have attained. They considered it unlawful to pluck ears of corn on the Sabbath ; He taught that the Sabbath was meant to aid man but not to chain him. They considered that acts of healing desecrated the Sabbath. He met their objection with scorn, and continued to perform acts of mercy and of love.

They attributed His power over unclean spirits to the agency of Satan. He taught them that their distorted vision, and deliberate rejection of good was a sin that never would find forgiveness. They took exception to His disciples' neglect of ceremonial. He condemned their lip-service with a quotation from one of their own sacred writers. According to St. Mark's account the people express astonishment at the contrast between His teaching and that of the scribes, in that 'He taught them as having authority'.

St. John's realization of the LIVINGNESS of Christ's goodness, and the contrast in which it stood to distorted vision and insincere religious observance forms one of the main themes of his Gospel.

He recounts the persecution of Christ for works of healing on the Sabbath ; and makes this persecution the occasion of definite teaching on the part of Christ as to the nature of sinlessness. When accused of

breaking the Sabbath, Christ shows the Jews that He is but taking God as His standard. 'My Father worketh even until now, and I work.'¹ His answer infuriates the Jews still more inasmuch as in calling God 'Father' He seems to make Himself equal with God. But Christ teaches them that He of Himself does nothing. His vision is God. His motive of activity is God. And this vision is the great Love of God animating Him, and issuing forth from Him to quicken 'whom he will'. No standard other than this exists for goodness. God Himself does not judge man other than in their acceptance or rejection of His Love: 'He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which sent him.' Only God is the dynamic of goodness, and Christ's claim to goodness calls to God as witness. 'I can of myself do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is righteous; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.' God is manifest in His activity:—'The works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father which sent me he hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his form. And ye have not his word abiding in you; for whom he sent, him ye believe not. Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me.—The faculty of

¹ *St. John* v, 17.

seeing is all wrong. 'Ye have not the love of God in yourselves.'

This re-iterated appeal to God as witness bewilders the Jews. 'Where is thy Father?' they ask upon another occasion. Jesus answers, 'Ye know neither me, nor my Father: if ye knew me, ye would know my Father also.'—'Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world, I am not of this world.' Pride, bigotry, hatred, murder were closing more and more tightly the ears of their spirits, the door of their spiritual apprehension. 'Why do ye not understand my speech?' Christ asked; and answered, 'Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.—But because I say the truth ye believe me not. Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God.'²

Here in the dramatic setting of the actual events through which Christ manifested by word and deed the quickening love of God, St. John unfolds all that that Love implies, and all that the realization of that Love demands in subjective consciousness. Once again we must see that St. John does not add anything to the great Fact, but only reveals the significance of that Fact for man. In the Epistle he sums up the

¹ *St. John* v, 17 to end.

² *St. John* viii, 44–47.

same thought in a few words. 'In him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him. My little children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God.'¹

6. THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD CONVICTING

EVIL

If Christ brought a new standard of righteousness in His vision of, and response to, the living and quickening Love of God, the coming of this standard convicted men of sin. This is the second certainty that St. John realized in His experience of Christ. In the Gospel he shows that Christ's power to heal the blind illustrates His power to illuminate the souls of men. Those that do not avail themselves of the light He is ready to give, saying 'We see', their 'sin remaineth.'²

Christ warns His disciples that in following Him they need expect only hatred from the world. His light has revealed the darkness of the human heart and the smallness of human motives, and now in seeing the

¹ *I John* iii, 5-9.

² *Ibid* ix, 41.

good and rejecting it, darkness becomes deliberate choice ; and hence sin.

‘ If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin : but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin ; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.’¹

So again the coming of the Spirit of Truth will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. ‘ Of sin, because they believe not on me ; of righteousness’, because in leaving them Christ meant them to find an inward realization, — ‘ because I go to the Father and ye behold me no more ; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged’.

The Epistle brings out St. John’s doctrine in a brief and comprehensive way. The message that Christ has brought to men is that ‘ God is light, and in him is no darkness at all’. To claim fellowship with Him and yet walk in darkness is to lie, and not to do the truth. ‘ But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’² The true Light that has shone forth illuminating human dark-

¹ *I John* xv, 22-24.

² *Ibid* i, 9.

ness is Love, manifested most clearly in the Death of Christ. For the sinner the Love of Christ is as 'it were 'Advocate with the Father', and 'propitiation for our sins.' 'Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'

Light and Love to St. John are thus synonymous. Both contrast with sin, which is hatred. 'He that loveth his brother abideth in the light—but he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.'

7. THE REALIZATION OF 'THE TRUE'

A Light that is Love needs no evidence but its own indwelling. Christ's continual appeal to the witness of the Father, His appeal to the witness of man's own understanding, was an appeal to the self-evident; to the great natural instincts of the human heart. The Light 'which lighteth every man coming into the world' is the ultimate witness to the Light *revealed*. The human heart knows love. A deliberate rejection of Love, the dense darkness of heart that called the working of Love the agency of Satan, is a lie against natural instinct itself; and a sin that has no forgiveness. Man's life and understanding are God-given: and when the fuller Reality

¹ *I John* iv, 10.

² *Ibid* ii, 10-11.

of the light that man has already obtained 'shineth' in the darkness, no other appeal for its truth is possible except appeal to 'apprehension', or recognition. 'In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not.—There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God even to them that believe on his name.'¹

Thus St. John's certainty of the God-experience, and of the fuller Life rests upon his apprehension of (upon receiving and recognizing) the deeper Reality of his own heart. 'And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.'

In the Gospel St. John gives in the words of Jesus a summing-up of the work He, the Master, had performed. 'O righteous Father, the world knew thee not, but I knew thee; and these (His disciples) knew that thou didst send me; and I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them.'² Apprehension has been of Love and

¹*St. John* i, 4-12.

²*Ibid* xvii, 25-6.

of Love's indwelling. This is St. John's final certainty. Certain too, is he that no other knowledge of God is possible ; and no other witness to God is needed.

‘ Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God ; for God is love. Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.—Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another. No man hath beheld God at any time : if we love one another God abideth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we abide in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have beheld and bear witness that the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.—And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him.¹

8. IS THE IDEAL LESS TRUE WHEN INTERPRETED?

We have said that St. John's interpretation of the Christ of History does not add to the Fact of Christ. When the simple clinging to a mother's influence passes to give place to dawning understanding, does understanding add to the Mother-fact? Must not clinging pass, to give place to understanding? Must not the power which guided childhood be self-realized?

¹ *1 John* vi, 7-16.

Must not conscious intelligence accept the influence involved? Must not Personality be achieved, and with it comprehension?

Sympathy, as between mother and son, becomes intensified when the spirit grows to understanding. The emotion of the Ideal sanctifies the Mother-image in the heart. Is this Mother-image but a mirage of the subjective life?—

Nay, is love more real than the once-loving? Can effect transcend its cause? Does not the very Image explain the Mother-fact? Has not rather the depth of emotion for the Ideal in St. John reproduced most faithfully, and interpreted most truly, the quality and nature of the Beloved?

CHAPTER IX

THE TRINITY IN UNITY

1. THE TWO-FOLD ASPECT OF ATTAINMENT

It must be seen that Spiritual Realization, defined as the awakening of the soul to the God-presence, and the sharing of the soul in the God-life, has received much wider significance and force from the interpretation that Christianity brings. Yet the mystics and thinkers of India came very near to the realization of the truth of the Gospel. The Buddha's emphasis on love for man, the Bhakta's belief that Love is God, foreshadow St. John's realization of the revelation of Love in Jesus Christ. Nothing of the beauty of India's thought is lost in Christ. While the belief of the Bhakta is present in St. John's vision, and he too sees that God is Love ; so does John see, as Buddha saw, that belief in Love is not enough, but Love must be realized in active loving.

But the Rsis' attainment is also an important contribution to truth. They understood that man had two aspects, the temporal and the spiritual. They knew that in realizing the spiritual man found God. They saw that realization was an intensely individual attainment. It cannot be objective to the self. Man must grasp eternal values by his own will. Yet they went further than this. They knew that the realization of the Perfect Self, though an individual attainment, and thus subjective, is at the same time

God-revelation. 'A man sees the self through the grace of the Creator.' God is present in realization. He is present in growth into the perfect personality.

The Rsis' thought is made clear in Christianity. God can be known only within the depth, and within the quality of perfect personality. 'He was in the world,—and the world knew him not, He came unto his own and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were begotten—of God.' But while God must be known as subject, yet the vision, the revelation, must just as certainly be other than what is man's natural equipment. It must be God-given. 'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one cometh unto the Father but through me. If ye had known me ye would have known my Father also, from henceforth ye have known him and have seen him.'

But the spiritual faculty was not yet perfect in His hearers. Philip replied, 'Lord, shew us the Father and it sufficeth us.' It was with sadness Jesus answered, 'Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip?—How sayest thou, Shew us the Father?' Are you so spiritually deaf as not to hear Divine words, so spiritually blind as not to see Divine acts?—Believe me, I tell you I bring you a Revelation of the Father. Or, if you will not accept me in faith, 'believe me for the very works' sake':—accept the witness that my works bring of the Divine.

Nothing less than Calvary in the end overcame in the disciples this spiritual blindness that pierced Christ to the heart. Here in His utter Self-giving they at last attained the Vision of the Father, and with it, the subjective power to follow on to realize a perfect personality. 'Where sin abounded grace did abound more exceedingly; that as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

2. THE INCARNATION AND RESURRECTION

ILLUSTRATING THE TWO-FOLD ASPECT

If the Life of Christ makes plain that the Vision must be God-given but at the same time it must be individually realized, so does the very fact of the Incarnation. The Incarnation proclaims that God is the Beginning, the End, the Reality, the Purpose of all becoming, and that He wills to make Himself known. But the knowledge of God, the realization of God, is not possible without the attainment of a definite type of consciousness; without the discipline through suffering, that Israel underwent; without the purity and faith that the Virgin manifested. When God develops the spiritual organ that can visualize Him, then, and not till then, He draws aside the veil that hides Him from our eyes. The veil after all is our own blindness.

As in the Incarnation so in the Resurrection must the vision given be individually apprehended. No realization of the Divine in Christ's acts and words, no

sharing of the triumph of His Risen Life was possible without growth in kinship of spirit, growth in appreciation, in love, and in faith, of the men whom He had chosen to be with Him.

3. THE REVELATION OF GOD IN CHRIST MUST STILL BE INDIVIDUALLY REALIZED

And as of old, so for us to-day, the Revelation of God in Christ must be individually realized. The dynamic God-given Christ must still grow within the experience of each soul, must again manifest Himself in personality as the concrete Presence, must once more appear as the end and Ideal of spiritual becoming. 'I am the way, the truth and the life'—by no other way than by the subjective realization of the Presence, can men come to the Father. The infinite possibilities of human personality are no vague abstract, but a Life, and perfection an inflowing grace.—The R̥ṣis too felt this must be true. They knew that God must Himself be present in realization and that perfection comes with the growing experience of God. But the Presence defined, the experience recorded are revealed by Christ, as never the R̥ṣis reported. What thought have they, describing the experience of God's coming, comparable with the thought of Bethlehem? Or of the idea of God's unfolding grace and beauty, comparable with the idea of the growing Boy at Nazareth? Can they define what the quality of mind is, possessing which, God is realized? The *Bhagavad Gītā* approaches nearest with the definition.—But even in it, is there manifested such a type of

God-consciousness as that which the Life of Jesus defined? — Patience, Forgiveness, Singleness of Purpose, Zeal for the Kingdom of the Father, Zeal that the knowledge of the Kingdom should spread and dominate men's thoughts and actions, self-renunciation to this Ideal, unswerving loyalty to it in Life, unswerving loyalty to it in Death. Has the Rṣi ever visualized God's Victory over sin, has the Bhakta ever conceived such a Love searching for the sinner, as depicted in the Cross?—towards which the Christ 'steadfastly set His face', clinging to the faith that Love is all powerful, Love is eternal, even in the darkest hell of time where God is not.

And to realize God, man must find in himself THIS PRESENCE, the Perfection thus defined. 'For me to live is Christ.' The experience Christ defined must be the direction taken of man's own living growth. Not even God in humanity's midst, not even perfection defined in concrete Life, can become man's salvation, without the becoming and the attainment of the individual, along the lines Christ marked out.

' Though Christ a thousand times
In Bethlehem be born,
If He's not born in thee
Thy soul is all forlorn.

The Christ on Calvary
Will never save thy soul
The Christ in thine own heart
Alone can make thee whole.'

4. GOD REALIZED IN FOLLOWING AFTER PERFECTION

Not less than the following after perfection, not less than the reconstruction of the concrete Presence of the Christ in the soul's life, is the way of salvation. This is the infinite possibility for personality for which the R̥ṣis searched. This is the definition of the highest. This is the direction of the highest. Christ is its definition. Christ is its direction. Christ brings the vision of a Life that is Divine. Christ brings the purpose of the Father ; the overshadowing yearning of the Father. Christ brings to man the power to realize his spiritual sonship.

Christian theology has got a term by which it defines God in such relationship of Father, to humanity made perfect. This term is Trinity. It stands for the Love which bounds creation, a Love that has expressed its Divine craving for free response ; that quickens within the finite the possibility of the Infinite ; that carves out of time the perfect image of its own eternity ; that stirs in man a sense of his Divine worth, drawing him on to realization—not merely to know but drawing him on to be. It stands for the Love that Christ has stamped across man's heart, and mind, and will. It stands too for attainment, for the Ideal of the Beloved, for the experience of the Christ in inward consciousness, for the ' Holy Spirit ' which dwells in the vision and the becoming of men.

This Unity which is Trinity is the Love which needs, the Love which seeks, and the Love which is found.

CHAPTER X

ATTAINMENT THROUGH SUFFERING

1. BELIEF AS LIVING EXPERIENCE

SPIRITUAL Realization is the great meaning and goal of religion; and more especially is it the meaning and goal of the Christian religion. For Christianity brings, as no other religion can, the wider outlook and the vaster experience, for which all religions grope. But just because Christianity can bring Spiritual Realization, true Christianity is nothing less than Spiritual Realization.

Men repeat and learn their creeds, but when creeds have not been made IN them, when men do not grow THROUGH them they possess only a very external historical meaning. True 'belief' is, when the self becomes the agent in believing. A man can only truly believe in God when he finds God in his selfhood. When his personality is formed in God, then God becomes his thought, the director of his will, his motive, and his love. Then belief attains some meaning. Until then he plays with words of creeds, vital through another's living faith. So too a man believes in Christ when the re-incarnate spirit of the God within him, reveals Himself to a dark and ignorant world. This is the Fact of Christ again in selfhood. This is genuine testimony of conviction's worth.

When a man's creed flows from him as from a positive selfhood, the Holy Spirit will be in him a growth, a process, a continuity, of the God-life there revealed, a building up of selfhood which proceeds even though the sphere of activity changes, and his outward form may die.

It must be seen that such a positive perfection is an ideal worthy of the centuries through which India searched ; worthy of the suffering that she truly saw must needs accompany that search.

2. THE RECAPITULATION OF THE RACIAL EXPERIENCE IN THE INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE

In realization the individual Christian experience goes through the same embryo formation as the experience of the race.

God came out from the inmost heart of man. He came from within the race, born of a woman. The purified elements of the deepest man had as yet attained, to found expression in a woman—type of the holiest thought of Judaism—to be quickened into Life by her living consciousness of God. The Incarnation of the Godhead—it was the drawing out of God from the deep heart of man. God did not come from above arrayed in human form ; He came from within, giving expression to what was covered. And the life of Christ reveals just this same truth. His power over men brought out their deeper possibility, and widened their relationships with others. Love of God, and Love for man : Renunciation of self for a life of service : By example, by teaching, and by the

permeation of His Risen Life, He drew out from the human heart faculties of loving that were unknown before, and which led men on to realize the Divine.

What was His power? Some miraculous element of the God-Man?

Yes, miraculous, and much more. But it was something familiar, something simple too. A poor outcast woman 'loved much'. The disciples left all and followed Him. The one condition of benefit was Faith, i.e., renunciation of self in loving confidence. Christ in summarizing His Life and Work called its power **THE SUPREME LOVE** for He was about to give Himself for His friends. In Calvary He saw the principle of His activity at its climax, inasmuch as through His agony He hoped to draw all hearts to Him. Christ ever welcomed love, deep worshipping love of holiness, that stifled sinful hearts of men and women yet had to give Him; for in reciprocating His power of Love He saw their greatest hope.

I called the Incarnation the 'drawing out' of God from the human heart. And that God was Love—the great elemental somewhat, deep as Life itself, eternal as Life Itself. For Christ was Love Incarnate:—The holy passionate Life that burst through the human crust, to thrill the common heart in man. In renunciation of self for the good of all, Christ lived the dynamic of Love. He gave Himself and men's hearts widened in receiving Him, for He Himself was Love.

3. THE ATONEMENT AS THE RECAPITULATION
• OF CHRIST'S SUFFERING IN THE INDIVIDUAL

The great truth of the Atonement is yet again the recapitulation of Christ's experience in the experience of the individual. 'He that bare His own Cross is gone before and has died for thee on the Cross that thou shouldst bear thy Cross and desire to die on the Cross. For if thou art fellow in pain thou shalt be fellow in glory.'¹ The agony of the sacrificial Lamb is more than the agony of one frail body. It includes the spiritual agony in the hearts of those who stand beholding.

It was the Love they found in Christ that linked them to His overwhelming torture. The floods of the heart burst and overflowed, washing away their sin. 'She is forgiven for she loved much.' 'Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow?' And it is 'she who loves much' who, beholding, has part in the sorrow of the Sacrificial Lamb.

The heart must follow Christ through Calvary. In the end we must identify all that we love and all that we value, our highest and our best, with the things that count, with qualities that are Eternal, if we would keep them. We must gaze BEYOND. In Genoa there is a wonderful statue of Christ standing with arms outstretched over the recumbent figure of the dead father and his weeping daughter. The eyes of Christ are gazing into great eternal depths. He, the

¹ *The Imitation of Christ*, 'The Way of the Cross.'

Resurrection and the Life, is through that vision beyond, linking up the dead and the living, and transforming sorrow into joy and hope.

‘Knowest thou that Worship of Sorrow? The Temple thereof founded some centuries ago now lies in ruins, overgrown with jungle, the habitation of doleful creatures: nevertheless venture forward, in a low crypt arched out of falling fragments thou findest the Altar still there, and its sacred Lamp perennially burning.’¹ And as Carlyle passed through the Porch of the Sanctuary of Sorrow, he felt an infinite love and pity for his fellow-man. It was as though the first effects of suffering, and the first steps towards its elimination were a widening of the heart to bring in others. Gradually this widening of the heart went further. As the Sacred Gates opened to admit him into the divine depth of Sorrow, he found the world-wide paradox, that happiness comes though self be annihilated and all that self holds dear,—when self and its values are requickenened into life by God. ८

‘Love not pleasure, love God, this is the Everlasting Yea.’

The swamping of our ideal; the clamour and jangle and noisy triumph of the motives that rule humanity; the failure that comes through many forms; by these agencies the heart still is linked to the sacrifice of Calvary. No need, like the Yōgi to add to the sufferings of time. To live at all brings suffering. Yet let us live and suffer visualizing eternal realities. There

¹Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, p. 20.

is Calvary. Others pass by. But in loving much, in sorrowing much, we can 'behold and see.' And vision brings conviction of realities other than those of sense, —the Reality of Love transcending sense and time.

4. THE RESURRECTION IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S EXPERIENCE

Thus Atonement leads us to the Resurrection:—Love's triumph through a purified re-awakened Hope. In the inmost heart of sorrow Love must ever find a pure essence. Just as the sharp agony of the Cross burst asunder the true Divinity of Christ from the human form, so in the hour of the soul's agony the Divine splits sharply from the temporal, the Eternal Spirit strives to free itself from Space and Time; and in the very wreck of human happiness there comes a deepening of purer happiness in a Resurrection Love and a Resurrection Vision that unites to God and man.

The portals of the Spirit World are ever open. That which keeps us out is the illusion of Space and Time and the Material, which are, as it were, the boundaries of our minds. But Christ, the spiritual figure of the way, breaks down illusionary barriers. He offers the old-new path of renunciation and sorrow, and throws across it the Light of a wide eternal Hope. 'If thou bear thy Cross gladly it will bear thee, and will guide thee to a desirable end where will be an end of sorrow—though it be not here.'¹ And as

¹ *The Imitation of Christ*, Ibid.

one lifts the Cross and treads the way step by step, the spiritual justifies itself in the experience. We are, as it were, growing through belief. God, as it were, incarnates Himself again, and lives and dies, and goes through hell again with us, to justify His Love and Truth and Eternity and Perfect Righteousness.

5. THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S EXPERIENCE

Only experience can interpret and vitalize Belief. This too is true of 'Holy Spirit' in what He must mean to the individual. When the Spirit of God moved upon the void then was there beginning. So must He move creatively upon selfhood as the self faces sorrow and the dark unknown. Until then a man is but an animal hemmed in by instinct; or a child to be pleased by sense, and overawed by threats of Law.

A spirit made for an earthly Eden is but the supreme play-thing of a phenomenal creation, a beautiful freak, which from the very paradox of its two-fold origin must have a 'fall'. Either it must identify itself with its material Eden, and be a completion of the phenomenal effort which called it forth, or it must START AGAIN, as the Spirit of God once started, with the dark void.

Man's happiness is not in time but in eternity. The only hope of attaining in the spiritual its realization is in re-starting. By doing so a man turns his back on Eden and the phenomenal world. He learns to win with sweating brow and anguished soul his honest

spiritual food. This has been the only method of spiritual achievement that history recounts of all the great lights of the race. Christ Himself once walked with God in earthly Eden. Who loved more than He, the beauty of the country, and the subtle intertwining joys of human life? But His heart beat against the bars of its phenomenal prison, and the very beauty of sensation pointed to its fuller source. Thus of His own free choice He turned His back on Eden, and faced a dark negation of pain and sorrow. He won His Resurrection triumph, and His Resurrection power with 'sweated brow'.

There is a sanctity and an eternal purpose within the heart of sorrow. For only through sorrow and through suffering can man find the deepest possibilities of his selfhood. This again is the thought implied in the wonderful philosophy of suffering given in the Book of Job. It draws a picture of a man who had found an earthly Eden. He had heaped up an abundance of all that the world counts good. And with terrible suddenness he lost it all. The foundations of his life were shaken and the edifice he had built for love and happiness tottered and fell. He looked out on the wreck of what he had been. The future spread before him as a great negation. With heart beating wearily, and the mind's vision distorted into a thousand questionings, he tried again and yet again, to grip some little substantiality out of the 'void.' . . . And he found God.

. . . The spirit that finds God, has begun its creative emanation upon the 'Deep'.

6. 'THE PATH TO THE SELF IS HARD'

Said the Rsis, 'The sharp edge of a razor is difficult to pass over ; thus the wise say the path to the Self is hard.'

Yet though hard, experience can pass over to attain the spiritual vision. Experience can learn the eternity and the ultimate triumph of Love. Experience can win through suffering the very Presence within of the Spirit of God. Perhaps there are few—either Christians or non-Christians—who are ready to accept a 'belief' at such a cost. Men find it easier to make a Cross a fetish, rather than a FACT. Mind has a tendency to view life as a smooth sea. We strive to make ourselves happy in the present ; to attain such circumstances as will allow us to float awhile upon appearances ; to glide with sensation ; content to live, not looking behind or before.

And even the lash of suffering, universal enough, God knows, does not make us pause to 'behold and see.'

' I saw Lord Love upon his galley pass
' Westward from Cyprus, smooth as glass
The sea was all before him,'—
' —But ever and anon
' As worked upon
' By some familiar Fury, grasping a scourge
' (An amethyst
' Fastened to his wrist—Love's wrist)
' He ran along the transyra, and did urge
' The rowers, and striped

‘ Their backs with blood : whereat they leapt
 ‘ Like maddened hounds, and swept the sea until
 it hissed.

‘ Then I :—

‘ Lord Love, what means this cruelty ? ’

‘ But he to me

‘ Deigned no reply :

‘ Only I saw his face was wet with tears,

‘ And he did look ‘ Beyond and yet beyond.’ ¹

‘ Beyond ’ is the Reality of the spiritual, the greater fulness of Love’s own Kingdom, to which He guides us.

¹ Brown, ‘ Aber Stations.’

GLOSSARY

- Aranyakas*, Part of Vedic Literature dealing with the third stage of a Brahman's life when he resides in the jungle.
- Ātman*, The Self or Universal Spirit.
- Ānṛitam satyan channan*, 'The Immortal veiled by Reality.'
- Ativādin*, One who is enlightened.
- Arahatship*, The Buddhist's term for the perfect life.
- Ābhīras*, A foreign tribe of cowherds with whom the Cowherd God Kṛṣṇa has been said to have originated.
- Avidyā*, The Principle in Sankara's philosophy which makes for Illusion.
- Asat*, Non-Being.
- Avatāra*, An Incarnation.
- Aniruddha*, In the philosophy of Ramanuja, Self-consciousness, a form of Vāsudeva.
- Ahankāra*, The I-principle.
- Bālsalya*, Parenthood.
- Bhagvan*, God.
- Bhagavad Gītā*, An episode of the Hindu Epic, the Mahābhārata. A devotional book of Hinduism.
- Bhāgavatas*, The worshippers of Vāsudēva.
- Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, A religious book of the Hindus.
- Bhakti Mārga*, The Path of Devotion.
- Bhakta*, The Devotee.
- Bhakti Yōga*, Attainment of God through selfless love.
- Bhikkhu*, Mendicant.
- Brahman*, The Supreme Being.
- Brahma*, The Creator God.
- Brāhmanas*, Part of Vedic literature dealing with sacrifices.
- Brāhman*, The highest caste.
- Buddhi*, The Reason.
- Buddha*, A title of Gotama, the Enlightened.
- Citta*, The whole Self-consciousness.
- Chandāla*, A despised class.
- Cooly*, A labourer.
- Dharma*, Virtue.
- Dīśya*, Servantship.
- Īśvara*, God.
- Jyotisam jyotih*, 'The Light of Lights.'
- Jñāna Mārga*, The path of knowledge.
- Jñāna*, Wisdom.
- Jīva*, The Individual Soul.
- Jñāna Yōga*, Attainment of God through attainment of knowledge.
- Jains*, A religious sect.
- Kṣatriya*, The second highest caste.
- Karma*, Belief in retribution.
- Karma Yōga*, Attainment of God through performance of duties.
- Kṛṣṇa (Vāsudēva)*, A name given to God in the Bhagavad Gītā.
- Kṛṣṇa (Gōpāla)*, The Cowherd God worshipped by the Vaiṣṇavās.
- Mūkhya prāṇa*, Vital breath.
- Māyā*, Illusion.
- Mēru*, A Mountain.

Mukti, Salvation.

Madhura, Sweetness.

Muni, A holy man.

Manas, Mind.

Nēti, *Neti*, The negative which describes the Supreme Self.

Nirvāna, The Buddhist's Goal.

Narāyana, A name for God.

Om, The mystic syllable formed through the union of three letters A-U-M, signifying Brahma, Viṣṇu, Śiva, the Hindu Trinity.

Pantheism, The identification of the world with God.

Param Jyōtis, The Supreme Light.

Paramārthika, A term in Śāṅkara's philosophy for true knowledge.

Para, The Highest.

Pradyumna, In the philosophy of Rāmānuja, Mind, a form of Vāsudēva.

Parabrahman, The Highest Spirit.

Prapatti, Faith.

Paraśanath, The sacred mountain in Behar of the Jains.

Prakṛti, Matter.

Puruṣa, The Individual.

Sutra, A philosophical verse originally intended to be memorized.

Sādhu, Religious mendicant.

Sānti, Peace.

Samkarsana, In the philosophy of Rāmānuja, living creatures, which are a form of Vāsudēva.

Samhitas, Part of the Vedas consisting of hymns of praise and prayer.

Satyasya Satyam, 'The Reality of reality.'

Suṣupti, Deep Sleep.

Swarga, Heaven.

Swarāj, Freedom.

Sakya, Companionship.

Saivism, The worship of Śiva.

Sāmkyā, A system of philosophy.

Sat, Being.

Rṣi, Sage.

Tat tvam asi, 'Thou art That.'

Tathagata, The Buddha.

Tapas, Austerities.

Upaniṣads, The Hindu Scriptures.

Udgītha, The syllable Om.

Unqualified Monism, Śāṅkara's philosophy which teaches that only Brahman-Himself above all attributes and thought-exists, and all else is illusion.

Vaiṣṇavism, The worship of Viṣṇu.

Vēdānta, A name for the Upaniṣads meaning the End of the Vedas.

Vijñānam Anandam Brahma, 'God is Bliss and Knowledge.'

Vedas, Hymns to the Nature Gods.

Vaiśya, The third caste.

Vāsudeva, A name for God.

Viṣṇu, A name for God.

Vyavahārika, Term in Śāṅkara's philosophy for ordinary knowledge.

Vidvān, The enlightened.

Yōga, A school of philosophy, which aims at concentration of mind.

Yōgin, One who follows Yoga.

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